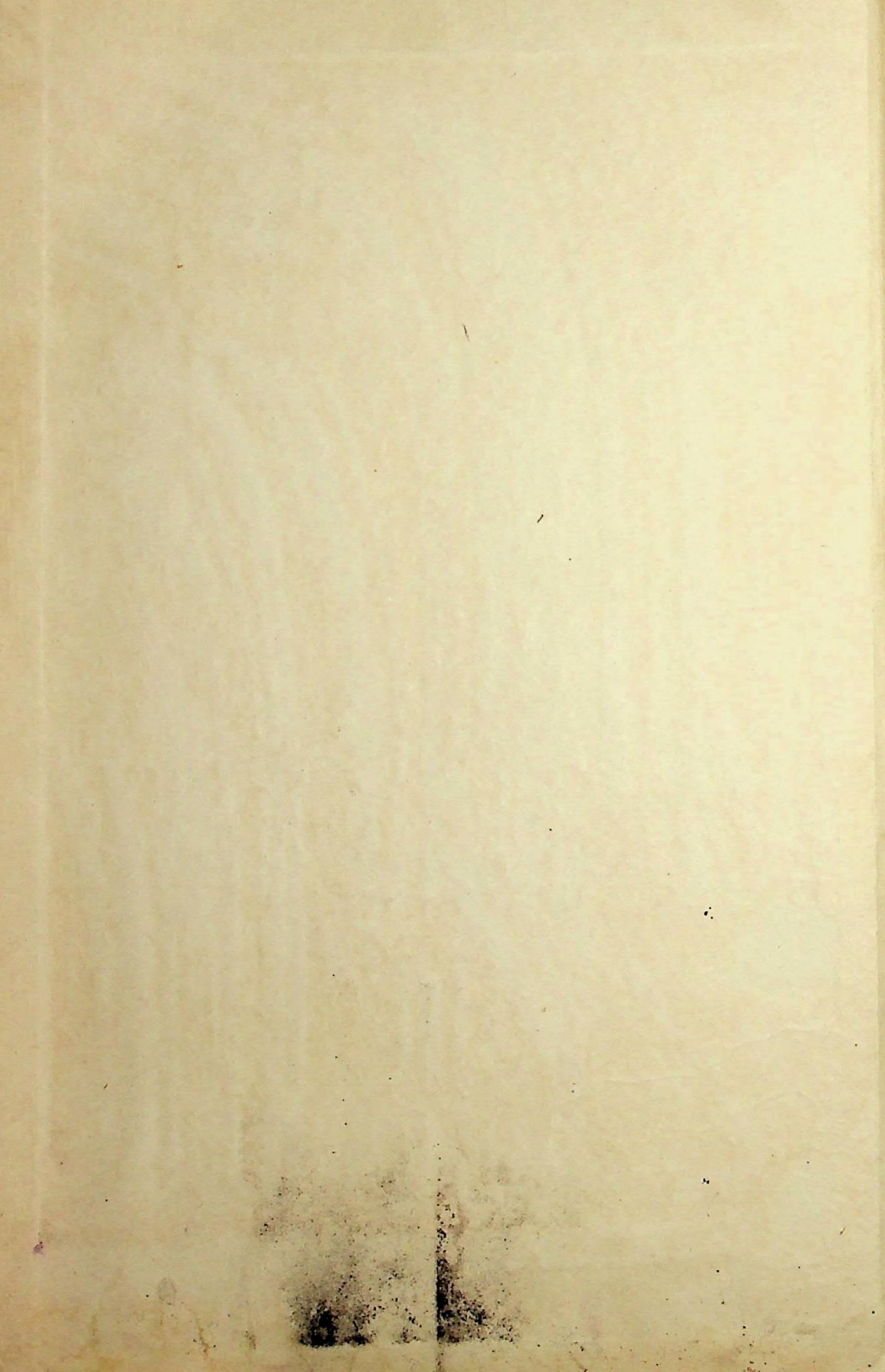




THE GRANTH  
OF  
GURU GOBIND SINGH AND  
THE KHALSA  
BROTHERHOOD

CLINTON H. L. ... N















The Granth of Guru Gobind Singh  
and  
The Khalsa Brotherhood

*By*

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## Preface

Was Guru Gobind Singh, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "a misguided patriot" who, in the opinion of another friendly Indian critic, turned Sikhism from spiritualism to militarism? That he was a mighty warrior no one can doubt; but that did not necessarily make him a militarist. This militaristic interpretation seemed prevalent in the West, so this question was in the writer's mind when in 1955 he commenced research on the subject under the Hartford Seminary Foundation. It is hoped that the reader will in the following pages find some clarification of the problem.

The excellent library of the foundation then contained almost no fresh material on the tenth guru and his Granth; most of it was forty years old, or more. However, with the 300th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh in 1967 there has been a veritable renaissance of learning and literature in this field. Books by the dozen and magazine articles by the score have appeared in the last two or three years. These were for the most part ably written by Indian scholars. Most were, quite appropriately, eulogies; but many also were constructively critical of certain Sikh traditions.

One reason for another contribution to the subject is that this one is by a westerner who has spent the better part of forty years among the Sikhs in the Punjab. It probably presents a point of view that is somewhat "different" from both the prevailing western and also Indian viewpoints. The opinions expressed are the writer's own; but he sincerely hopes he has been fair to one of the great sons of India. In any case, this little book is offered with the confidence that the Sikhs will, in the words of their congregational prayer, "overlook manifest faults."

Thanks are due to Dr. Ganda Singh for supplying two photos of the Guru's *Hukam Namas*, to say nothing of the wealth of information about them contained in his Gurmukhi Punjabi book on that subject. For genuine interest and generous counsel given by many Sikh friends the writer is grateful; all this tends to make the following pages a combined product of both East and West—or so the writer hopes. The reader must judge for himself.

CLINTON LOEHLIN  
LA MESA, CALIF.





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## CHAPTER 1

# The Life and Work of Guru Gobind Singh

Since Sikhism represents the development wrought by the ten gurus over a period of two centuries, each building on the work of his predecessors, a summary for their contributions should be helpful. About the year 1500 Guru Nanak founded the Sikh faith by preaching a synthesis of Bhakti Hinduism and Islamic Sufism, touring possibly from Ceylon on the south to Arabia on the north, as far east as Assam and as far west as Mecca. He took the important step, just before his death, of appointing a successor to the guruship; and further, in preference to his two ascetic and celibate sons he favoured a devoted disciple, unrelated to him, who had a wife and children. Sikhism thus broke with the ascetic tradition at the start, and the gurus, with the exception of Guru Har Kishan who died as a boy, have been family men, and the Sikhs have been a body of householders ever since.<sup>1</sup> The second guru Angad adapted the old Punjabi Lahnda alphabet into the Gurmukhi script, which has remained the sacred script of Sikhism ever since. The third guru Amar Das thoroughly organized the Sikhs into *manjis* (literally "beds" which were kept in the main gurdwaras for the special use of the gurus or their representatives), or parishes. This became necessary as Sikh congregations developed as far east as Bengal and Assam; and so the Sikh genius for organization early came into service for the Panth. Guru Ram Das commenced work on the Golden Temple and so founded the religious capital of Sikhism at Amritsar, or Ramdasapur as it was known then. At the beginning of his guruship Arjan completed the Golden Temple at Amritsar, after amassing considerable wealth under a system of the regular collection of tithes and offerings

<sup>1</sup> The Hindus divided the ideal life into four stages: Student, Householder, Sadhu, and Sanyasi. The gurus sanctioned only the first two.



carried out by special stewards called *masands*. He also founded the towns of Tarn Taran in Amritsar district and Kartarpur in Jullundur district, both of which are today of importance. His crowning work was the compilation of the Ad Granth, in 1604, which gave the new faith an authentic book of sacred teaching.

The last five gurus had to face an increasingly aggressive and hostile Islamic State, and gradually built up an army of defense. Gurus Arjan and Teg Bahadur fell victims to Muslim fanaticism, and it became the work of the tenth and last guru, Gobind Singh, to complete the development of Sikhism by founding the militant Khalsa Brotherhood which has survived severe persecution by fanatical Muslim emperors, and infiltration by Hindus, and is the main cohesive force of Sikhism today.

Gobind was the only son of the ninth guru, Teg Bahadur, and his wife Gujari. Guru Teg Bahadur left Anandpur in the Punjab to make a tour of Bengal and Assam, but he left Gujari at Patna in Bihar where Gobind was born on December 26, 1666.<sup>1</sup> One of the four "Throne Gurdwaras" is on the site of his birth-place on the outskirts of Patna.

The *Vachitar Natak* is the only writing in either Granth which claims to be autobiography. In it Gobind traces his ancestry from Raja Dasarath and his wife Kushalya through Ram and Sita, then through the descendants of their son Lav on through the Sodhi gurus, Ram Das, Arjan, Har Gobind, Teg Bahadur, to himself. Guru Nanak's descent is traced from Lav's brother Kushu through Raja Kalket and the Bedis, so named because they were readers of the Vedas in Kashi (Banares) (Chapters II, IV). In Chap. VII Gobind tells how he himself was born at Patna while his father was off in the East bathing at holy places of pilgrimage. Later, he was taken to the Punjab, where tutors gave him instruction in Hindi, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Persian, and lessons in riding, swimming, archery, the use of the sword and other weapons. It was when he reached the age of interest in religious duties (*dharm karm*) that his father was martyred by Emperor Aurangzeb. At Anandpur (City of Bliss) and later at Paonta (a fort which he built a hundred miles away on the banks of the Jamna on the west side of the Dehra Valley) he says, "I hunted bear, nilgai, and tiger; and so, without real

<sup>1</sup> Some authorities give the date as December 22, 1666.



cause Fateh Shah, the Muslim ruler of that region, became very angry with me." The war clouds were gathering.

In the meantime complaints reached the Emperor Aurangzeb that Guru Teg Bahadur was trying to aid some Hindus who had come in a delegation from Kashmir, where they were being forcibly converted to Islam. Other writers say he was moving about with a large following making "forcible exactions" from the Sikhs, or even plundering the countryside.<sup>1</sup> Teg Bahadur was summoned to Delhi, arrested, and ordered either to accept Islam or to perform a miracle for the emperor. It was about this time that he appointed his son Gobind as guru in his place. On November 11, 1675 Guru Teg Bahadur was publicly beheaded in the Chandni Chauk of Delhi, the second guru to suffer martyrdom at the hands of Muslim rulers. Although he did not believe in the Hindu religion he gave his life not only for the Hindus but essentially for the greater cause of religious freedom for all.<sup>2</sup>

The violent death of his father made a deep impression on the young Gobind. He made it his life mission to right his own and his people's wrongs. At the age of nine he was publicly proclaimed guru in accordance with the wishes of his father. Soon after this, at the age of eleven, he was married to Jito, daughter of a Khatri of Lahore. As it was too risky to go to Lahore for the marriage at the bride's home, the guru turned the environs of Anandpur into a second "Lahore" and the marriage was celebrated there with great pomp. Some time after he also married Sundari, the daughter of a Sikh. From Sundari was born Ajit Singh; from Jito, Jujhar Singh, Zorawar Singh, and Fateh Singh. Although the marriage with Jito took place in 1677, Jujhar was not born until 1690, so it is probable that they did not live together for some years, until Gobind Singh was about twenty years old.

Guru Gobind Singh well knew the importance of the pen as well as of the sword in the coming struggle for freedom. His court at Anandpur became a literary centre as his father's had been. He employed fifty-two bards to translate into Braj Hindi the stories of Indian heroes and heroines from the Puranas

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Teja, Singh, Ganda, *A Short History*, p. 57, Cunningham, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Singh, Trilochan, *Guru Teg Bahadur*, chapter XXIV.



and from the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics. "His purpose in creating the literature was to infuse a new spirit among his followers and to steel their hearts against all injustice and tyranny".<sup>1</sup> Although most of this literature was lost in the river during the retreat from Anandpur some years later, a good deal of it is preserved in the Dasam Granth.

The series of battles which were to fill the guru's life from now on commenced in February 1686 with the bloody battle of Bhangani in which he defeated the forces of the raja of Kahlur, Bhim Chand. The Hindu hill rajas became jealous of the guru whom they regarded as an upstart, and they feared his growing power. Soon after this the guru and these same hill rajas joined forces against the imperial armies who came to collect revenue, and defeated them in the battle of Nadaun in 1687. Later, the hill rajas joined forces with the imperial army against the guru; and so it went.

About this time the famous and controversial propitiation of the goddess Durga took place on Naina Devi mountain, not far from Anandpur. It seems that Pandit Kesho of Banares failed to get Durga to manifest herself, so Guru Gobind Singh threw all the stores of *ghee* (clarified butter) into the sacred fire at once, making a blaze that was seen for miles, and, flashing his sword, said, "This is the goddess of power!" However, the story soon spread that the goddess had actually appeared and given him the sword!<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime, the Muslim rulers felt that they had to do something about this new state with its private army, and so the imperial troops began closing in on Anandpur in force. The guru decided it was time to organize his followers into the Khalsa, the militant brotherhood of the guru's "own." There is some controversy among Sikh scholars as to just what happened; but the traditional story given here is too good not to be true! At the time of the spring fair at Anandpur in 1699, the guru suddenly brandished his sword before the assembled multitude of Sikhs and demanded a head. After startled looks and growing apprehension one Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore, offered his head. The guru took him into a tent, the sound of a blow was

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Teja, Singh, Ganda, *op. cit.* p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, vol. V, p. 65.



heard, and blood gushed forth from the tent. The guru appeared with his sword dripping blood and asked for another head. The assembly began to melt away, but finally Dharm Das, a Delhi Jat, offered his all. Muhkam Chand, a Dwarka (on the western coast) dhobi, Himmat, a Brahmin cook, and Sahib Chand, a barber, followed. In each case, blood flowed from the tent, but after the five had thus volunteered, the guru opened up the tent to show five headless goats, while the five beloved ones sat in splendid robes. Thus a Khatri, a Brahmin, and three low castes (Shudras) formed the nucleus of the Khalsa.

The guru baptized them with a dagger, then was in turn baptized by them. Such was the dramatic beginning of the Khalsa Brotherhood. The guru knew he had five men who could be depended on! After baptism, they all took the surname "Singh," meaning "lion." They were always to wear the five K's: *kes*, or long uncut hair done up in a top-knot (nor were they to cut any hair of the body); *kanga*, or comb; *kirpan*, dagger or sword; *kara*, steel bracelet; and *kachch*, under-shorts.<sup>1</sup> Thus they would be quite distinct from both Hindus and Muslims, and their group consciousness would be intensified. It would be impossible, too, for them to deny their religion while wearing those signs.

Discipline was tightening up. Their baptism (*pāhul*) too had been performed with a dagger, in place of the old Hindu custom of drinking the water in which the Brahmin priest had dipped his foot, "foot-baptism" as it was called (*charan pāhul*). The sacred thread of the high-castes had been discarded, the old castes erased, and now all Singhs were equal and were to intermarry freely with all other Sikhs. They were to have no relations with smokers, infanticides, or the ostracized followers of Prithi Chand, Dhir Mal, Ram Rai, or the *masands*. They should eat only *jhatka* meat from an animal decapitated with one stroke. There was to be no idolatry, and the guru's hymns should be read or sung at the stated times daily. On another occasion the guru spoke in favour of the family man as superior to the recluse; against reliance on astrology or fortune-telling;<sup>2</sup> and in advocacy of the custom of having congregational devotions with men and women worshipping together.

<sup>1</sup> Grewal and Bal, *Guru Gobind Singh*, say that contemporary writers of that time frequently mention five weapons rather than the five K's, p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, V, pp. 148, 158.



At the earnest entreaty of a devoted follower he married Sahib Kaur. The Sikhs say she remained a virgin, and she is referred to as the Virgin Wife, Mother of the Khalsa.

The imperial army besieged Anandpur for three years, and finally in the winter of 1704 the guru was forced to evacuate it. While getting his baggage across the Sarsa River most of his manuscripts were lost. The guru's family was scattered. The two elder sons were killed in battle. The two younger ones, with their grandmother, were treacherously delivered to Wazir Khan, the governor of Sarhind by a discharged Brahmin servant of the guru. Over the protests of the Nawab of Malerkotla, Wazir Khan put to death, perhaps by walling them up alive, these lads aged eight and five after they had refused to deny their faith and accept Islam.

The guru himself escaped, after the last stand at Chamkaur, with the help of loyal Muslim friends, and disguised as the Muslim "Uchch ka Pir" he made his way to the wastes of the South Punjab, and gradually collected a group of followers. Imperial troops pursued him and a battle took place near Muktsar, where the Muslims were so distressed by lack of water that they withdrew. Forty former deserters, led by the heroine Mai Bhago, redeemed themselves by joining the guru's forces. Most of them died fighting. One of the mortally wounded was offered a last boon by the guru. He asked forgiveness for all the deserters. After something of a struggle the guru finally granted forgiveness for this most heinous of sins, desertion in war. Bhago was wounded, but recovered, although later she seems to have lost her reason and wandered off in the forest.

For nine months there was a respite and the guru remained at Talwandi Sabo in the South Punjab. He turned to literary work, and the place became known as the guru's Kashi (the ancient name for Banares, the Holy City of the Hindus). It is commonly referred to by the Sikhs as Damdama Sahib, or Breathing Place. Here he put the Ad Granth in its final form, with one short verse of his own and several hymns of Guru Teg Bahadur added. These additions cover twenty-seven pages in the English translation in Macauliffe, and they are scattered through the Ad Granth according to tune and metre. Guru Gobind Singh's copy, which is the forerunner of the standard Ad Granth of today, was lost in the looting of the Golden Temple at Amritsar



by Ahmad Shah Durani in 1762. There is an old hand-written copy of the Ad Granth at Kartarpur in the Jullundur district which is generally believed to be the original Granth dictated by Guru Arjan in 1604. It was kept by Dhir Mal and does not contain these additions. It is likely that parts of the Dasam Granth were written at Damdama, although the collection as we have it was not made until twenty-six years after the guru's death.

After the death of Aurangzeb in February 1707 the guru's friend Bahadur Shah eventually won the throne, probably with some help from the guru's forces. The guru accompanied him to South India, possibly on a preaching mission of his own, possibly to strengthen Muslim-Sikh amity. The guru eventually settled down at Nander on the banks of the Godavari in Hyderabad State. Here he was fatally stabbed by two Pathans, probably hired assassins sent by Wazir Khan who feared the growing intimacy of the guru with the new emperor.<sup>1</sup>

Before Guru Gobind Singh died he proclaimed the Granth Sahib as the only guru of the Sikhs henceforth. This was obviously the Ad Granth, as the Dasam Granth was not compiled until many years later. He may have done this because he had no sons left on which to bestow the guruship; but it is more probable that he wished to avoid such conflicting claims to the guruship as those that almost cost his father his life and left divisions and scars in the Sikh brotherhood. He apparently recovered after the emperor's physician had treated the wound, but it opened up again and soon after the guru died. Perhaps this death was next best to that asked for in his prayer to Durga, death on the field of battle. He was forty-one years, nine months, and twelve days old at his death on October 7, 1708.

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Teja, and Singh, Ganda, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 78.





## CHAPTER II

# Status and Purpose of the Granth of the Tenth Guru

The Sikhs have two books of Scripture, or Granths as they are called: the Ad Granth (Original Book), and the Granth of the tenth guru.<sup>1</sup> An understanding of this latter book is important, for, with the Ad Granth as a foundation it is the key to the understanding of the Sikh character. In general, the Ad Granth aimed at developing the mystical and contemplative side, the Granth of the tenth guru, the martial side of the Sikhs. The whole history of the Sikhs shows a remarkable flexibility of character which is mirrored in these two books; and the Granth of the tenth guru is an example of the successful exploitation of this characteristic flexibility in the development of a martial spirit in a whole people. This spirit, embodied in the Khalsa militant brotherhood, enabled the Sikhs to survive, even though it tended to cut them off from fellowship with surrounding social and religious groups. These two books helped form the Sikh ideal man, the soldier-saint.

There is confusion as to the status of the Dasam Granth. For example, an English writer as late as 1930 made the following statement:

The best account of Govind's life, opinions and adventures is given in a volume written by himself and received by his disciples as equal to the Adi Granth. As the "Daswan Guru ki Granth," or Book of the Tenth Guru, it is always placed with the other in their temples and is considered equally inspired.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Granth" is from the root meaning "to knot together," and refers to writing on palm leaves strung together and tied. Granth now means book, here especially the Scripture of the Sikhs.

<sup>2</sup> Scott, George Bartley, *Religion and Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 27.

Archer, Dr., *The Sikhs*, seems to confuse the two Granths and calls the Daswan an enlargement of the Ad Granth, pp. 198, 210, 233.



This is quite erroneous. Only a handful of extremists regard the Dasam Granth in its entirety as in any way equal to the Ad Granth. The Dasam Granth is not to be found in the Golden Temple at Amritsar; and in their Book of Discipline the Sikhs refer to their Scriptures as "the Ad Granth and the Word (*bīnī*) of all ten Gurus," with no mention of the Dasam Granth whatever. With the exception of the religious poetry of the tenth guru, Sikh scholars themselves are divided in their estimate of the authenticity and value of much of the tenth Granth.

### **The War on Caste**

Both Granths aimed to free their people from Hindu practices, especially from the tentacles of caste. Success or failure here is crucial for the future of Sikh democracy.

Caste is one of the most complex social systems in the world, and many factors have entered into its formation. These may be summarized somewhat as follows: the geographical isolation of India and of its internal regions; similarly, the general geographical position where many roads led into India, and ended there, leaving numerous cultures to be absorbed and given their places in the social scale; colour and race; clashes of patrilineal and matrilineal cultures, the Aryan being patrilineal and the Dravidian matrilineal; sensitivity to the idea of pollution and purification; the belief in the power of food to transmit qualities to the eater; the belief in the effectiveness of tabu, totemism, and mana; the important ritual of ancestor worship and sacrificial meals; conviction of the inevitability of karma and transmigration; hereditary occupations and trade secrets leading to trade (caste) guilds; and the exploitation of the masses by a clever priestly hierarchy with a subtle religious philosophy and a monopoly of sacred learning. An explanation of the need and the stability of caste is given by a western scholar as follows:

Geographical circumstances have imposed a certain unity on the inhabitants of the peninsula, whereas diverse origins of the people have dictated variety... It is caste which has made it possible for both requirements to be satisfied within a single social system, a system, moreover, which has proved historically to be very stable.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hutton, J. H., *Caste in India*, p. 1.



The following are pretty generally accepted as criteria of caste practice: (1) Subservience to the Brahmins; (2) food restrictions such as tabus on eating and drinking with other castes, or eating food prepared by them; (3) marriage restrictions, making caste endogamous; (4) the hereditary status of the individual in his caste; this used to mean a hereditary occupation as well, but the complex economic and social conditions today have greatly modified this; and (5) belief in karma and transmigration to give divine sanction to the whole caste system. In view of the fact, then, that Sikhism started as a protest against the caste system, it should be instructive to inquire as to the extent that the Sikhs have been able to free themselves from its shackles.

First, then, as to the Brahmins, the Khatri gurus of the Sikhs are to be classed with those Kshatriya leaders who rebelled against the Brahmins and founded religions of protest, such as Gotama the Buddha and Mahavira the Jain. In fact, the Sikhs have an obsession against domination of any kind in their democracy.

Secondly, do they have food restrictions, either as to what they eat, or with whom they eat, or by whom the food has been prepared? There are almost no restrictions on kinds of food that may be eaten, except that they do not eat beef, more from social custom than from religious conviction, since they have no cow-puja like the Hindus. They call meat *Maha Parshad* (Special Food, perhaps); and only require that the animal be killed with a single decapitating blow, and not bled to death in the Mohammadan fashion (*jhatka mārna*, not *zabah karna*). Their whole attitude toward eating with others is embodied in the *langar*, or free kitchen and refectory attached to their important *gurdwaras*. The *langar* is open to all regardless of creed or caste, and all must sit down and eat together. The gurus are said to have established these *langars* for the purpose of breaking down caste restrictions on inter-dining.

When it comes to marriage restrictions the situation is complicated by the fact that there is a shortage of women among the Jat Sikhs. Risley puts the proportion of girls to boys at about 76%, as over against 92% for the Hindus and 96% for the Muslims. The shortage may be due to the practice in the past of female infanticide among the Jats, or to greater neglect in the care of young girls. This has, understandably, led to a relaxing of



marriage restrictions with a corresponding influx of women from lower castes. Also there is probably general caste consciousness on the part of the parents making the marriage arrangements, with social pressure from the relatives on both sides. A Sikh scholar writes thus:

If inter-marriage is considered a test of equality, at no time was there much inter-caste marriage between Sikhs converted from different Hindu castes. The untouchable converted to Sikhism remained an outcaste for purposes of matrimonial alliances.<sup>1</sup>

We may conclude, then, that normally Sikhs do observe caste restrictions of making marriage arrangements. It is safe to say that marriage restrictions will remain the last stronghold of caste.

As to caste status being hereditary, it is well known that the Sikh gurus were zealous propagandists and made converts from other groups, especially from the lower castes, or even from the outcastes. Guru Gobind Singh was notably zealous in converting these and making good warriors out of them. These humble converts have shown great devotion and zeal, but it is sadly true that often they are not received as social equals, and sometimes equality of worship is not accorded to them.<sup>2</sup> Sikhs from the Chūhra (Sweeper) caste are known as Mazhabi Sikhs, and those from the Chamars (Leather Workers and Tanners) as Rāmdāsī Sikhs. These converts have come in to the extent of half a million in the decade between the census of 1921 and 1931. While it is true that full equality with Jat Sikhs has not been granted to low caste converts, yet their entrance into the Khalsa brotherhood has advanced their status and opened new doors of opportunity, and it is probably only a question of time until they reach a status of full equality.

An interesting feature of the Ad Granth is the inclusion of many hymns from low caste Bhagats (Saints) such as Kabir, a weaver; Ravi Das, a shoe-maker, Sadhna, a butcher, and Sain, a barber. Then, too, much is made of the fact that the Golden

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Khushwant, *The Sikhs*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Singh, Kartar, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 108: "The treatment meted out to Sikh sweepers and Chamars by the 'high-caste' Sikhs is atrociously against the Gurus' teaching. They have remained...the outcastes, the polluted, the untouchables, and the eternally damned."



Temple in Amritsar is open in all four directions, symbolizing the fact that God is everywhere, and that Sikhism is open to the entry of all men. There is thus much teaching in Sikhism that is against caste distinctions, and the standard of equality set in the Granth is high:

Under the Guru's instruction abandon caste, Acquire the excellent colour of tambal. (Guru Arjan)

**Note:** When the four castes are blended together in the Sikhs, they assume an excellent colour.<sup>1</sup>

He who knoweth and fixeth his attention on Him night and day is a Brahman. (Guru Angad)

**Note:** A man is not a Brahman merely by paternity.<sup>2</sup>

The final question concerns belief in *karma* and transmigration. Since both are assumed and taught in the Ad Granth, the answer is a clear yes. However, the equal emphasis on the grace of God gives the Sikh a lively hope of immediate deliverance. Once a human body is acquired, male or female, rebirth ceases for those who meditate on the Name and devote themselves to service of others. As Guru Nanak neatly solved the relationship of *karma* and grace:

Karmī āwai kapra, Nadarī mokh duaru.  
(Japji 4)

By deeds the body (garb) comes,

But by His gracious glance the door of salvation opens. *Karma* and rebirth, then, need not apply to those who rely on the grace of God; but all others must undergo transmigration.

It seems that the Sikhs, in spite of their original protest against caste, do practice caste to some extent, and belong in the caste system. This is not surprising, for the out and out non-conformists have mostly left the Punjab—the Buddhists and the Muslims, for example. The Sikhs seem to have formed a sectarian caste, as Hutton sums it up:

In a similar way religious groups, groups in many cases formed in defiance of and in protest against the caste system,

<sup>1</sup> Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, IV, p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* II, p. 204.



have found themselves relegated, whether they wish it or no, precisely into the position of castes in that system they had aspired to reform... The Sikhs are a case in point.<sup>1</sup>

The war on caste, then, is still going on. A brave beginning has been made by the gurus, but the issue among their followers is still undecided.

### *Sikhs and Hindus*

Are the Sikhs, then, Hindus? This question is related to the one on caste, but it is not the same. A recent authority on caste distinguishes between ritual (religious) status and secular status in the caste system, and says that the emphasis on behaviour (the secular aspect) rather than on ritual (the religious aspect) makes for a consistent all-India status system.<sup>2</sup> Hutton cites the persistence of caste in such non-Hindu groups as the Muslims, and the Christians of South India.

The difficulty is to define what a Hindu is. Perhaps the best way to do this is to suggest some characteristic beliefs held by various groups who regard themselves as Hindus, and then see how these apply to the Sikhs. Such might be: (1) the authority of the Vedas; (2) a desire for the ministration of Brahmin priests; (3) belief in *karma* and transmigration; (4) the sacredness of the cow; (5) individual worship, in distinction to congregational worship; (6) efficacy of pilgrimages for spiritual development; (7) idolatry; (8) *ahimsa*, or non-killing; (9) renunciation and asceticism; (10) caste ritualistic practices.<sup>3</sup>

Looking at these, then, with reference to the Sikhs, it seems clear that they had scant respect for the Vedas; at any rate, their own Granths were considered far superior: "The Veds, the Purans, the Quran, and other Muslim books, have not found His secret." (Swaiya of Gobind Singh.)<sup>4</sup> They have no desire for the ministration of Brahmin priests, and oppose the domination of Brahmins in anything. They do believe in *karma* and transmigration, even though they do not apply to a devout Sikh, who is saved by grace, not merit; yet the all-pervading presence in

<sup>1</sup> Hutton, J. H., *Caste in India*, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> Stevenson, H. N. C., in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Jan. 1954.

<sup>3</sup> Blunt, *The Caste System in Northern India*, p. 303; Singh, Sher, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, p. 75; Pitt, Malcolm, *Introducing Hinduism*, pp. 40, 41.

<sup>4</sup> Macauliffe, V, p. 282.



the Granths of this belief, which is the very root of Hinduism, must exert a strong pull back into Hinduism. While they do not eat beef—there is no cow-puja among them—the Sikhs exalt congregational worship, and the advantages of the fellowship of the saints is the theme of much of the *Sukhmanī* of Guru Arjan. Hindu pilgrimages are disparaged, but the Sikhs have developed their own pilgrimages, such as the one to the gurdwara deep in the Himalayas on Hem Kunt where Gobind Singh received his call to the guruship from the Immortal One. Idolatry is forbidden, but in spite of the teaching that God only is to be worshipped there is danger that the exalted position given the Guru Granth Sahib may lead to its worship. Khushwant Singh has this to say:

With the influx of Hindus into the Sikh fold, a number of ceremonies associated with the worship of idols have grown around the *Granth*. In the morning, it is opened with elaborate ritual, which is repeated in the evening, when it is wrapped up and put away for the night...despite these customs, the *Granth* is even today not like the idol in a Hindu temple nor the statue of the Virgin in a Catholic cathedral. It is the means and not the object of worship.<sup>1</sup>

*Ahimsa*, or the non-taking of life, and asceticism are not practices of the Sikhs; but, as noted above, they belong in the caste system and there is some observance of caste among them, especially in marriage arrangements. It seems clear that the Sikhs are not Hindus. While they accept *karma* and transmigration, so do the Buddhists; and other religious groups in India besides the Hindus observe caste. And the Sikhs themselves, who should certainly know, are vehement in declaring, "We are not Hindus!"

The gurus incorporated the Hindu pantheon in their Granths, and accepted much of Hindu theology, even though they rejected Hindu religious practices; but the form of Hinduism they accepted was not the orthodox Hinduism of the *sanatan dharm* (ancient faith), but *bhakti* Hinduism in the *sant* tradition teaching salvation by grace through loving devotion to the True Name. Instead of the monistic Absolute It, far beyond human comprehension, there is belief in a personal God who loves and who

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Khushwant, *A History of the Sikhs 1469-1839*, p. 308. C. Archer, *The Sikhs*, p. 275—"In some gurdwaras, even in the Panjab, the *Granth* was really worshipped as if it were divine." Also, Singh, Sher, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, p. 90



can be loved. Guru Gobind Singh even pictures him as a God who suffers with his people: "In the suffering of the saints Thou dost suffer." (*Tria Charittar*, verse 388). The word *parshad*, grace, occurs at the head of every chapter of the Ad Granth and many of the Dasam Granth, and constantly emphasizes salvation by unmerited grace. This cuts at the root of asceticism which sought to earn, and in a way, compel the grant of *Muktī* (cessation of rebirths) by the Supreme Impersonal Absolute.

This *bhakti* cult was an old Hindu development, coming to the gurus from Ramanuja in the eleventh century, and Ramananda through his disciple Kabir in the fifteenth century. It emphasized devotion rather than speculation. What was new was the organization the gurus developed in their Panth (Path). This organization, culminating in the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh, enabled this new religion to survive persecution and absorption, and to transmit to modern generations a religion of grace and loving devotion to a Personal God.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Loehlin, C. H., *The Sikhs and their Scriptures*, an account of the geographical and political setting of Sikhism, the gurus' lives and work, the racial roots of the Sikhs, some of the characteristics of Sikhs and Singhs, and the development of *Bhakti* and Sufism, etc., may be found.

## CHAPTER III

# The Granth of the Tenth Guru

## Character, Form, and Language

The Granth of the tenth guru is a book consisting of prayers, psalms in praise of the Immortal Being, heroic episodes from the mythology and epic literature of India, and stories for moral instruction and many of immoral intrigue, with, finally, a letter of complaint to a fanatical conqueror.

This Granth is all rhymed poetry. It was designed to be heard, so there is considerable repetition, and a variety of meters to hold the attention. Some of the opening verses of the *Vachitar Nātak* in positive and negative description of God, go as follows:

Sada ek jotyam, ajūnī sarūpam,  
Mahā dev devam, mahā bhūp bhūpam. (v. 3)

Ever one Light, uncreated beauty,  
Great God of Gods, great King of Kings.

Pareyam pawitram, punītam purānam,  
Aje Yam abheyam, bhawikhyam bhawānam. (v. 8)

Ineffable, holy, pure, ancient,  
Unconquerable, unfathomable, ever-living.

The language is the Braj Bhasha of the Eastern Gangetic Plain. The Braj dialect is a variety of medieval Hindi with a mixture of Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic words. One book, the Epic of Chandi is in Punjabi, and the Letter to Aurangzeb, the Zafar-nama, is in Persian using Gurmukhi letters. Most of the poetry of the tenth Granth is hardly intelligible to the modern Punjabi reader without the aid of a commentary.

Experts tell us that the guru's poetry is of a very high order:

In Hindi he developed a style, which for martial cadence, variety of form and richness of imagination . . . has remained unsurpassed since his times. In lines ranging from monosyllabic verse to long and multiplied *swayyas* and *kabits*, we



seem to hear the torrential flow of hill streams or the galloping sweep of cavalry on the march. His intellect quivers in emotion and breaks out against superstition and hypocrisy into humour, irony, or banter. His emotion... is raised to the highest pitch of ecstasy when he communes with God.<sup>1</sup>

Another Punjabi writer would agree in general with some reservations, thus:

This Granth is very difficult, and is composed in the Hindi dialect in several kinds of verses. In it there is the teaching of several of the Shāstars, the rules of warfare, the wiles and tricks of women, and some information on worship and religious knowledge. From this it is evident that Gobind Singh was very clever in writing poetry.<sup>2</sup>

The writings included in the Granth of the Tenth Guru were composed at different times by Guru Gobind Singh and his band of fifty-two poets and translators. There were, in the main, two periods of literary activity: at Anandpur and Paonta during the years before 1700; and during the nine months breathing spell at Damdama during the fall and winter of 1705-06. Such further dates as can be ascertained will be noted in the descriptions of the various books given later.

There is much confusion about the authorship and authenticity of many of the writings. This confusion came about as follows: in 1734, twenty-six years after the death of Guru Gobind Singh, Bhai Mani Singh, a devoted follower and friend from the beginning, gathered together compositions and translations of the guru and his bards and compiled the Granth of the Tenth Guru as it exists today. After Bhai Mani Singh's martyrdom in 1738, Sikh scholars assembled at Damdama expressed doubts about the spiritual value of the tales and translations, reasoning that "many of them are of Hindu origin, others not fit for perusal, and none comparable with the hymns contained in the Ad Granth. The Sikhs therefore maintained that the *Hikāyāt* or Persian Tales, and the whole of the *Triā Charitar* or stories illustrating the deceit of women should be omitted, and included in a volume which might be read, not for religious purposes, but for the entertainment and delectation of the public."<sup>3</sup> Tradition has

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Teja, Singh, Ganda, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> *Sikhan de Raj di Vithya* (History of the Sikh Rule), p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Macauliffe, V, p. 260 n. 1.



it that at this juncture another learned Sikh, Mahtab Singh, arrived from Bikaner, and his opinion was asked. As a short cut to end the prolonged discussion he suggested that as he was on his way to kill the Muslim Massa Ranghar who was desecrating the Golden Temple with drunken feasts and dancing women, if he succeeded in killing him and returning alive, the Dasam Granth should remain as Mani Singh had compiled it, Tales and all; if he did not succeed, let the Granth be divided. Mahtab Singh succeeded in his mission of vengeance, and so the Granth was left intact as we now have it and called "The Holy Granth of the Tenth Guru."<sup>1</sup>

## Purpose of the Dasam Granth<sup>2</sup>

A Punjabi historian of the last century explains the guru's purpose in composing new hymns and translating Hindu literature as follows:

The Guru discovered that from reading the Ad Granth the Sikhs became feeble-hearted. Therefore (said the Guru), I myself will prepare such a Granth that the Sikhs from reading it will learn the art of ruling, the use of weapons, and other skills so that they will become fit for warfare; so from that very day he began the composition of a huge volume, and when it was completed on Sunday, on the eighth day of the new moon in the month of Bhadon 1753 Bikrami (1696) he named it "The Granth Sahib of the Tenth Sovereign."<sup>3</sup>

In what looks like an authentic stanza of the guru at the end of the Krishan Autar, this statement of purpose is found:

I have rendered in the vernacular the tenth chapter of the Bhāgavat with no other purpose than to arouse desire for a holy war (a righteous war of the Lord). Verse 2491.

Macauliffe gives three reasons for the translations from Hindu mythology and the Hindu Epics: first, to dispel cowardice and

<sup>1</sup> Ashta, Dr. Dharam Pal, in his monumental work of *The Poetry of the Dasam Granth* holds that all of it is the Guru's own work. (p. 18) Dr. Mohan Singh, *History of Punjabi Literature* believes that these tales were the work of the bards; likewise Dr. Khushwant Singh.

<sup>2</sup> The Gurdwara Edition is a huge volume weighing some 29 pounds, with pages 20 inches by 12 inches, printed in large type with letters  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch high. The smaller edition, which is the one used in this study has 1,428 pages of a size 11 inches by 7 inches printed in 24 point type. It is their Revised Standard Edition.

<sup>3</sup> *Sikhan de Raj*, p. 49.



incite to bravery by filling the mind with heroic examples; second, by showing what a brave woman (the goddess Chandi) could achieve in battle to spur brave *men* on to surpass her achievements; and, third, that his Sikhs might see the inferiority of the Hindu sacred writings and so appreciate those of their own gurus more.<sup>1</sup>

This militant purpose should become clear in the descriptions of the various books of the Granth which follow. This is not to say, however, that the guru was a vengeful militarist.<sup>2</sup> His wars were wars of defense; and his own poetry as well as his conduct shows a longing for peace and harmonious fellowship, which sometimes extended even to his former enemies.

## A Brief Description of the Books of the Dasam Granth

### The Jap

This is the introductory invocation of the Granth. There seems to be general agreement that it was written by Guru Gobind Singh himself. Along with the Vachitar Natak, the Swayas, and the Zafar Nama, the Jāp has at the beginning "Sri Mukhwākh Pātshāhi Das," "By the holy mouth of the Tenth King." This seems to be a special formula to authenticate these writings as those of the tenth guru himself. The date of its composition is uncertain. Archer states that it was written during the breathing spell at Damdama, which would make it about 1705; but Macauliffe says that it was used in the preparation of the *amrit* when the Khalsa was founded, which puts it at some time before 1699. The Jāp is the morning prayer of the Singhs, as the Japji of Guru Nanak is the morning prayer of the Sikhs. It is about half again as long as the japji and takes about twenty-five minutes to recite.

Macauliffe says, "The Hindus have a work entitled *Vishnu Sahasar Nām*, 'Vishnu's Thousand Names.' The Jāpji was composed to supply the Sikhs with a similar number of epithets of the Creator."<sup>3</sup> There are actually about 950 names in the Jap. In

<sup>1</sup> Macauliffe, V, p. 83-84.

<sup>2</sup> As maintained, for example, in Latif's *History of the Panjab*, p. 261.

<sup>3</sup> Macauliffe, V, p. 261 n. 1

*Jap* is a Sanskrit word which means "to utter in a low voice, whisper, mutter (especially prayers or incantations); to invoke or call upon in a low voice." The form of the word here is *Japu*, which makes it a noun, "meditation."



most of the 198 verses God is described in negative terms. As all these verses are in the form of rhymed couplets, the vocabulary and ingenuity of the poet are superb. The opening verse is typical.

Thou hast no form or feature,  
No caste or lineage;  
None can describe Thy appearance,  
Colour, mark, or garb.<sup>1</sup>

There is an inclusiveness and universalism that keeps coming to the surface. "All" seems to be a key word as the poet breaks through to more positive description:

Thou art the source of all light,  
And the object of all praise;  
Thou art the supreme Lord of all,  
And the moon of the universe.

vs. 119

Perfect is Thy discernment.  
All turn to Thee for refuge.  
Thou art the Great Companion;  
Thou art the sure Providence.

vs. 123<sup>2</sup>

The fervour of the true *bhakta* comes out in hailing the immortal as man's companion. Something of the devoutness of the guru's nature comes to a climax in the concluding verse:

Thou fillest and feedest the whole universe,  
Thyself self-existent, auspicious and united with all.  
Thou art the embodiment of mercy;  
Thou art the deliverer from birth and death.  
Thou art man's constant Companion.  
Everlasting is Thy glory! vs. 198<sup>3</sup>

Among the thousand names there are seventy-five Muslim names. Only a few of these, such as *Rahīm* and *Karīm*, *Razākai* (Nourisher), *Aruv* (Pardoner), and *Salāmai* (Peaceful) are among the Muslim's ninety-nine names of Allah: but all the names used would be familiar to Punjabi Muslims. The Mohammadan tongue and ear would surely delight in Allah and *Nirsharīk*; *Karīm* *Rahīm*; *Husnul Chirāg*; *Garībun Niwās*; *Kāmal Karīm*; *Rājak Rahīm*; *Bahishtun Niwās*; and many such others. It is

<sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup> Singh, *Brajindar, The Jap*, pp. 1 and 33.

<sup>3</sup> *Brajindar Singh*, pp. 1.33.



quite likely that these, besides being sonorous and dignified, were used to attract the interest of Muslims. The guru had Muslim contingents in his army as well as Muslim friends to whom he would wish to offer something congenial.

The guru is quite Mohammadan in his outlook when considering the subject of incarnation. In the Jāp the immortal is "Ajanam," without birth (vs. 34). He is without a body, has no name, no son. He rejects the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita where Krishna is said to become incarnate from age to age (Gita 4:8). In another place the guru says, "How can He Who has no form, no colour, be said to be the blue-coloured Krishna?"<sup>1</sup>

The immortal One is for Guru Gobind Singh sometimes the "wholly Other," far above human comprehension, before whom man can but bow again and again. As the succeeding waves of negative attributes roll on one may well wonder how there can be any communication with this inscrutable Being. The answer is, of course, that He of his grace has offered companionship to man, so that man does not have to understand, but only to accept and adore. A Sikh philosopher thinks that Sikhism offers a new path of salvation in addition to the traditional paths of knowledge, work, and devotion,—the path of the Name. Meditation on the Name produces *wismad*, wonder; and the object of such poetry as this is the creation of the mood of aesthetic ecstasy: "It is the poetry and the music of the contents of the Granth revealing simple and direct truths which charm a reader of Gurbani... and can bring peace to the soul." "It is aesthetical insight leading man through appearance to reality."<sup>2</sup> This is a matter of definition mainly, for *Nam marga* seems to be a phase of *bhakti marga* rather than a separate pathway to Reality. It does, however, emphasize meditation on the Name as all important in Sikhism, and so in this opening hymn of the tenth Granth men are given a thousand names on which to meditate.

### Akal Ustat Praise of the Immortal

This hymn of praise is included by Macauliffe under the compositions of the guru, but Cunningham says that the opening verse only is Gobind Singh's. This may be due to the fact that

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Brajindar, pp. 1.33.

<sup>2</sup> Singh, Sher, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, pp. 51, 52, 238.



two "signatures" (*dastkhatt*) are mentioned in the opening verse. The one in the first line is that of "Pātshāhī 10" and the one a couple lines further along is that of the "Likhārī" or scribe. The first "signature" seems to mean that the opening verse was originally written by the guru's own hand, much like the "signature" attributed to Guru Arjan in writing the opening *mantra* of the Kartarpur Ad Granth.<sup>1</sup> In later editions of the tenth Granth the scribe wishes to assure his readers that he has copied the guru's own writing in this verse; a bit later he says he is the writer,—as dictated by the guru, of course.

The Akal Ustat is a jumble of subjects. The *Encyclopedia of Sikh Literature* by Kahn Singh blames this on the ignorance and carelessness of later scribes in arranging the material. Ashta says "The Akal Ustat was composed not at one time; its different parts were rather composed at different times and were later on compiled together."<sup>2</sup>

In the opening verse God is addressed as Akāl Purakh, Immortal Person; Sarab Loh, All Steel; Sarab Kāl, All Death; and later on as Mahā Loh, Great Steel; Mahā Kāl, Great Death; Asidhuj, Asiketu, Kharagketu, Having-a-Sword-on-His-Banner; and Asipānī, Having-a-Sword-in-His-Hand. Thus, so early in the Granth commences the war cult, and the immortal is pictured "as the impersonation and source of bravery."<sup>3</sup>

There is much of the negative description of the immortal that is like that of the Jāp:

He is invisible, indestructible, and without *distinguishing*  
dress;

He is without passion, colour, form, or outline;

He is devoid of caste marks of every kind,

He is the primal Being, peerless and changeless.<sup>4</sup>

There is a pantheistic and amoral flavour in the passage beginning with verse eleven where the immortal manifests himself, often in opposites, sometimes as a beggar, sometimes as a maharaja; sometimes in the Gayatri hymn of the Hindus, or in the muezzin of the Turks (Muslims), or may be in the Puranas; now as the

<sup>1</sup> See chap. 5, pp. 60, 61 add Appendix I, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Ashta, *Poetry of the Dasam Granth*, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Macauliffe, V, p. 261 n. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 262.



lover of his own wife, then as the lover of another's wife. He assumes all forms: householder, wandering ascetic, profligate, snake, bird, singer, dancer, holy man, soldier. At times He is nectar, or honey, or sugar-cane or its juice; then strong drink, or even the drunkard (6:16). It is difficult to believe that the guru himself wrote this section; and, indeed, it is omitted in Macauliffe's translation. However, more of this sort of pantheism follows, and finally the *bhakta* breaks forth into the fervid exclamation, "*Tu hi, Tu hi!*"—"Thou only, Thou only!" which is repeated sixteen times.

While the guru accepts much Hindu theology, sometimes inclining toward impersonal monism, then toward the personal deity of the *bhakta*, he has no respect at all for Hindu religious practices, which he satirizes as follows:

Against austerities:

Swine eat filth, elephants and donkeys bespatter themselves with dust.

Jackals live at places of cremation;

Owls live in tombs, deer wander alone in the forest, trees  
ever die in silence;

The man who restraineth his seed should only have the  
credit of the hermaphrodite;

Monkeys ever wander bare-footed.

They who eat grass and renounce the desire of wealth  
Are no more than calves and oxen...

They who engage in meditation resemble cranes, cats, and  
wolves.

For grazing on akk, eating fruits and flowers,  
And ever wandering in the forests, there is no animal  
Like the goat.

In the cold season the jackal barketh five times,  
And the elephant and the donkey utter various cries.

If anyone were by repeating God's name to obtain God,  
Who cannot be obtained by lip-worship,  
The warbler ever uttereth "*Tu hi! Tu hi!*"<sup>1</sup>

A series of riddles appears in verses 202-210. Various solutions have been offered by commentators, but the discerning find the answers in the second line, reading the words in the reverse order, as for example, the riddle in verse 204:

<sup>1</sup> Macauliffe, V, pp. 270, 273-4.



ko ninda, jas kavan, kavan pāp, kah dharm,  
kavan jog, ko bhog hai, kavan karm, apkarm?

What is slander, praise is what, what is sin, what right-  
teousness?

What is yoga, what lust, what is good action, evil action?

What, then is *ninda* (slander)? Go to the end of line two, and there is the answer, *apkaram* (evil action). *Jas* is *karm* (Praise is good action); *pāp* is *bhog* (Sin is lust); *dharm* is *jog* (righteousness is yoga). An ancient Indian pastime, indeed; but what it is here for is the question. Perhaps this is the kind of riddles that were common in the barrack-room or in camp; although these do seem more in the order of a moral catechism.

It is not surprising to have the war-goddess Durga ride in on her tiger: "Serpents hiss, her tiger roars, she brandishes her weapons, austere in conduct." A description of her follows in which she is terrifying to her foes, but glamorously beautiful to her friends. (Verses 221-224)<sup>1</sup>

Parts of the Akal Ustat are like the ironic message of guru Nanak. This stanza is often quoted:

The temple and the mosque are the same,  
Pūja and namāz are the same,  
All men are one, it is through error  
That they appear different. . .  
Their eyes are the same, their ears are the same,  
They are of one body, one build,  
A compound of earth, air, fire, and water.  
Allah and Abhek are the same,  
The Puran and the Kuran are the same,  
They are alike, all the creation of the One.

vs. 16-86.

This same tolerance is extended to include the world as the guru mentions among the seekers after God the people of Arabia, of France (in another place he calls the French "*durangi*," "two-faced"); the Kandhari, the Qureshi, the westerners, the Marathas, the Biharis, the Oriyas, the Bengalis, the English; the residents of Delhi, the Gurkhas, the Chinese, Manchurians, Tibetans, the easterners of Kamrup and Kumaun—all these were blessed as they sang the praises of the one Lord.<sup>2</sup> This is

<sup>1</sup> Translated in Chapter VIII.

<sup>2</sup> Akal Ustat verses 254-271. Some Mohammadan names for God are used in this section. This would be most fitting in this context.



quite a sweep of geographical imagination for one who, because of the political tension of his time, never travelled outside India.

The guru commences this book with an invocation to the God of war, the All Steel. He ends with an attitude of tolerance that pictures Hindus and Muslims, and even peoples in widely scattered parts of the world seeking the same God and being blessed by Him. Did not this represent the guru's hopes for the future, when the dark days of warfare should be over?

## Vachitar Natak

### The Wonderfully Coloured Drama

Along with the Jāp, the Vachitar Natak is one of the best known parts of the Dasam Granth, and so it is included in the *Das Granthi*, the "Little Das Granth" prayer-book of the Singhs.<sup>1</sup> The date of the composition of the Natak is given by Macauliffe as 1692, when Gobind Singh was twenty-six years old. It was probably written at Anandpur. This wonderful drama is a metrical composition divided into fourteen chapters. The language is archaic Hindi with a large admixture of Sanskrit, written in Gurmukhi characters. There is general agreement that this is an authentic composition of Guru Gobind Singh himself, and that parts of it are autobiography,—the only book of autobiography in either of the Granths. Praise of the immortal, satire on the religious practices of Hindu and other ascetics, and an account of the guru's ancestors and of his own life form the main subjects of this poem. A picture emerges of the ideal warrior-saint.

The warrior strain appeared in their ancestors of old. Their Aryan forebears conquered all northern India, singing the hymns of the Vedas as they went. A devout appreciation of Nature went along with the ruthless dispossession of the Dāsus. These vedic Aryans were the original warrior-saints, and the ideal of the soldier-saint dominates the Sikhs to this day. Sometimes this aggressiveness took the form of missionary zeal—witness the long preaching tours of Guru Nanak and Guru Teg Bahadur. At other times, many of them degenerated into quarrelsomeness and

<sup>1</sup> The First Edition was put out by the Shromani Parbandhak Kameti in 1950. It corresponds to the *Panj Granthi* of the Ad Granth. The contents are the Jāp, Shabad Patshahi Das, Akal Ustat, Vachitar Natak, Chandi Charitar, Chandi di Var, Gian Prabodh.



factionalism. It was, of course, this militant strain in the Punjabis that Guru Gobind Singh appealed to so successfully in his Granth, when the pressure of outward aggression united them in the remarkable fellowship of the Khalsa. An Indian historian writes thus:

There was no quality possessed by the Sikhs more remarkable than the elasticity of character, the power to adapt themselves to all circumstances, an expansive and contractive principle susceptible of being adjusted to the requirements of the moment. They possessed sufficient vigour of body and mind to withstand the changes of climate. The burning sun, heavy rains, freezing winter and rough weather exercised no deterring influence on them. The utmost persecution by the enemies of their faith, the demolition of their homesteads and sacred buildings and the enslaving of their women and children did not dampen their spirits.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Sodhi and Bedi families as given in the second, third, and fourth chapters, exhibits in vivid fashion this quarrelsomeness, and at the same time, the flexibility of character in his ancestors, whereby warriors turned scholars; ascetics, rulers; and rulers, ascetics, in kaleidoscopic succession with a minimum of friction. Here is a prose summary of the original poem:

From the union of Ram and Sita were born two sons, Lav and Kushu. Lav founded Lahore, and Kushu founded Kasur. Kalrai was a descendant of Lav, Kalket, of Kushu. These two began to quarrel, with the result that Kalket vanquished Kalrai, who fled to the Sanaudh country (the area between Muttra and Amarkot, south of Delhi). While the Kalket family established itself in Lahore as rulers, Kalrai married the Princess of Sanaudh. Their son, Sodhi Rai became Raja there, and he had two sons, Jagat Rai and Prithvi Rai. Appointing Prithvi Rai as Raja, Sodhi Rai took his elder son Jagat Rai and marched on Lahore. They remembered the old enmity and wished to avenge themselves by retaking Lahore. This they accomplished after a bloody battle. The surviving members of the Kushu family fled to Kāshi (Banares). There they became peaceful readers and expounders of the Vedas, whence the family name Bedi (Vedi, Band V interchange in Panjabi). Their fame reached their brothers the Sodhis, ruling in Lahore. The Bedis were invited to Lahore with the plea that bye-gones be bye-gones.

<sup>1</sup> Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 275.



They went and expounded the Vedas so congenitally that the Sodhi Raja turned his kingdom over to the Bedis and became a forest-dwelling Rishi. For a while the Bedis enjoyed being rulers again. The prophesy was made that a Guru, Nanak by name, would appear in the world in their family. To the Sodhi Raja in voluntary exile a like prophecy was made, to be fulfilled in the fourth generation. Then among the Bedis the old proneness to quarrel developed, and by fighting among themselves they lost their kingdom, apparently because of the confusion of castes that resulted from the disintegration of society during war. "Brahmans began to do the work of Sudras, while Sudras usurped the duties of Brahmans" (Chap. V, vs. 2).<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, the Bedis still had some twenty villages left in their possession, so they took to farming. It was among these Bedi farmers that Guru Nanak was born. Nanak became Angad, Angad became Amar Das, as one lamp is lit from another (vs. 7). Then Ram Das of the Sodhi family became Guru and fulfilled the rest of the prophecy.

The history of these families reminds one of Dr. Ruth Benedict's application of the Apollonian and Dionysian temperaments to American Indian tribes. She describes the Pueblo tribes of the South-west as Apollonian. They were moderates, calm, restrained, and inoffensive. The bison-hunting Plains Indians were Dionysian,—passionate, with a will to superiority, valuing "all violent expression." "The most conspicuous of these (Dionysian practices) is probably their practice of obtaining supernatural power in a dream or vision."<sup>2</sup> In this connection the supernatural vision of Guru Gobind Singh, described in the Vachitar Natak, comes to mind, in which, after severe penance and the practice of austerities, he was designated a son of the immortal and given a divine commission in the world. Possibly the strange experience with the goddess Durga on Naina Devi mountain may be something of this sort also. At any rate, this kind of violent emotion seems quite foreign to the ideals of Gurus Nanak and Arjan. If it is true that "the Apollonian type of personality is calm, restrained, 'classic'; it dislikes surges of emotion, vehement action, and insistence on the ego; this last should

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bhagavad Gita, 1:41-43, where, owing to lawlessness women become corrupt, caste confusion arises, and caste and family customs are abolished. This section seems far too Hindu in outlook and ideals such as the exaltation of the Vedas and the sanctity of caste to be the guru's own work.

<sup>2</sup> Benedict, Ruth, *Patterns of Culture*, pp. 73-74.



be muted in favour of group tranquillity,"<sup>1</sup> then the Sukhmani of Guru Arjan, with its theme of peace of mind, best obtained in the "company of the saints," idealizes just this type. We may, then, characterize the Ad Granth and the Sahajdhari Sikhs as Apollonian in outlook and ideas, and the Dasam Granth and the Keshdhari Singhs as Dionysian. Since most of the people in both these groups accept, with possibly some difference in emphasis, the teaching of both these books, so different in tone and outlook, the explanation must be in the "enormous plasticity of human minds, the almost limitless degree to which they are conditioned or determined by what they are exposed to."<sup>2</sup> The point here is that these two opposite temperaments, found by Benedict in two different groups of American Indian tribes, exist side by side to a conspicuous degree in this one people; and it often makes them, in the words of Ross Wilson, long professor of History in the Forman Christian College, Lahore, "one of the most paradoxical people in India."

A description of this two-fold turn to their character comes from an enemy—Qazi Nur Mohammad—who came to India with the army of Ahmad Shah Durrani, 1764-65, and was a witness of the Sikh's battles with the invader. He referred to them in rude and imprecatory language, but at the same time could not help proclaiming their virtues;

Do not call the "dogs" dogs, for they are lions, and are courageous like lions in the field of battle. How can a hero, who roars like lions in the field of battle, be called a dog? If you wish to learn the art of war, come face to face with them in the field. They will demonstrate it to you in such a way that one and all will praise them for it... Truly they are like lions in battle and in times of peace they surpass Hatim (in generosity).

Leaving aside their mode of fighting, hear ye another point in which they excell all other fighting people. In no case would they slay a coward, nor would they put an obstacle in the way of a fugitive. They do not plunder the wealth and ornaments of a woman, be she well-to-do or a maidservant. There is no adultery among these "dogs"... they do not make friends with adulterers and house-breakers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kroeber, *Anthropology*, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> Kroeber, *op. cit.* p. 619.

<sup>3</sup> Singh, Harbans, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 166.



Guru Gobind Singh describes his call to the guruship in the sixth chapter. Verses 1 to 28 are here given in prose summary; then follows a literal translation of his call and response:

When I was performing austerities and meditating on Kali and Maha Kal on lofty Hem Kunt in the high Himalayas, I became absorbed in the Immortal One and was one with the Lord because of the devotion of my mother and father. I did not wish it, but the order came for me to take birth in the Kal Yug (the Present Evil Age). The Immortal One told me how the demons were first created, but they trusted in their own arms and so were destroyed. Then the gods were created, but they became proud (worshiped their own strength) and called themselves Parmeshur (Supreme God). Maha Dev (Shiva) called himself The Imperishable; Vishnu appointed himself Parmeshur; Brahma stated that he was Par Brahm (Supreme Brahma); but none of them knew the True Lord. Then the Lord created the Eight Witnesses (Earth, Sun, Moon, Fire, Wind, etc.) but people began to worship them. Some people worshiped stones, some worshiped water, and became ensnared in egoism. The Siddhs and Sadhs likewise founded their own Panths (Sects), and went astray in quarrels and pride. When I created Datta Traiya, he only let his finger nails grow long and matted his hair, but he failed to meditate on the love of Hari. Gorakh made disciples of great Rajas, but only taught them to split their ears and put in earrings. Ramanand became a Bairagi and wore a wooden neck-lace, but forgot the Lord. All the Great Souls only founded their own Sects. Muhammad was ordained King of Arabia by the Lord, but he only taught circumcision to his devotees. He caused his own name to be repeated and did not proclaim the True Name. So the Immortal said to me,

"I have glorified you as my son, I have created you to  
proclaim the Panth;  
Go, spread the faith there, and restrain the people from  
folly."

I stood up, made obeisance, and said,

"This Panth will spread in the world when Thou givest  
assistance."

For this reason the Lord sent me; then I took birth and came  
into the world.

What He spoke, that I speak, and I bear no enmity to  
anyone.

Those who call me Parmeshur shall all fall into the pit of  
Hell;

Know me as His slave only,—have not the least doubt of that.



I am the slave of the Supreme Being, and have come to  
 behold the spectacle of the world;  
 What the Lord told me, that I tell the world, and I will not  
 remain silent through fear of mortals.  
 (vs. 29-33)

We have come into the world for this purpose,  
For the sake of the faith the divine Guru sent us:

“Wherever you extend the faith,  
Seize and hurl down evil deceivers.”  
For this very purpose we have taken birth—  
All you saints, understand this in your heart;  
To spread the faith, to protect the saints,  
And to extirpate all evildoers.

(vs. 42, 43)

These verses bring out both sides of the guru's mission. Evildoers were to be destroyed by force, and the true faith of loving devotion to the Supreme God was to be extended in the world by peaceful proclamation. The two-fold nature of this mission called for the warrior-saint, well exemplified in Guru Gobind Singh.

Something of the ardour the guru had aroused in a most unwarlike people is seen in an incident in the battle of Bhangani, when a holy man took on a mighty warrior in single combat. The contingent of Udasi sadhus had deserted and left the battle-field on the approach of the enemy, it is true; but their Mahant Kripal remained. Macauliffe describes the affair as it is narrated in the Vachitar Natak:

Kripal, the mahant of the Udisis, now advanced on horseback and asked the Guru's permission to engage Haiyat Khan. The Guru replied, 'O holy saint, thou canst kill him with thy words. Pray that I may be victorious.' Kripal, the Guru's uncle, overhearing this conversation, and seeing that the mahant was filled with martial enthusiasm, prayed the Guru to let him engage Haiyat Khan. The Guru inquired with what weapon the mahant was going to contend with his adversary. 'With this club.' The Guru smiled and said, 'Go and engage thine enemy.' It was a spectacle to see the mahant with his matted hair twisted round his head, his body only clothed with a thin plaster of ashes, and his belly projecting far in front of his saddle, proceeding to engage a practised warrior armed with the latest weapons of destruction.

When the mahant approached and challenged Haiyat Khan the latter saw that he had no warlike weapon and consequently retreated from him, scorning to attack a



defenceless man. The onlookers were amused and said, 'How can that faqir contend with a Pathan?' The mahant, however, continued to challenge Haiyat Khan. As when a snake is escaping into its hole it will come forth if its tail be trodden on and attack the aggressor, so Haiyat Khan, who had been retiring before the mahant, now advanced against him goaded by his taunts. He aimed a blow of his sword at the mahant, which the latter received on his club, when lo! Haiyat Khan's sword fell to pieces. The mahant then addressed him, 'Now hold thy ground and defend thyself from me.' The mahant rose in his stirrups, and wielding his club with both hands struck Haiyat Khan with such force on the head that his skull broke and his brains issued forth and stained the battlefield.

(Macauliffe, V, pp. 38, 39)

The Vachitar Natak was written amid the uncertainties of war and its opening verses reflect the guru's preoccupation with war and death, and set the mood for the whole:

I bow with heart and mind to the Holy Sword,  
Assist me that I may complete this Book.

### Praise of the Sword

The Sword cuts sharply, destroys the host of the wicked,  
And has power to make the battlefield glorious.  
It is an unbreakable shaft in the hand,  
It is very sharp, and its flash pales the radiance of the sun  
The Sword brings peace to the saints,  
Fear to the evil-minded, destruction to sin,  
So it is my refuge.  
Hail! Hail to the Creator of the world,  
The Saviour of creation, my Preserver in every way,—  
Hail, O Sword!  
Everlasting Light, Uncreated Form,  
God of great Gods, King of great Kings,  
Without body, everlasting,  
Without form or disposition,  
All Powerful—Hail, Wearer of the Sword!

(vs. 1-3)

The theory of the guruship is given thus:

The Holy Nanak was revered as Angad,  
Angad was recognized as Amar Das,  
And Amar Das became Ram Das.  
The pious saw this, but not the fools,  
Who thought them all distinct.



## Chandi Charitar, the Story of Chandi, Parts I, II

Var Sri Bhagauti Ji, Chandi dī Vār,  
The Epic of Chandi

Three versions of the story of Chandi, or Durga, the war goddess, are presented in succession. The first is from the Markandeya Purana. The second is labelled in the Granth as "the Bachitar Natak version," and is from the Bhagavat Purana. The third, also based on the Markandeya Purana, was probably written by the guru himself. The guru's designation, "Patshahi 10" does not appear in the first two versions, but does in the third, the Epic of Chandi, which makes it seem plausible that bards translated the first two parts, while the guru himself wrote the third. The time and place of composition are not known. All three parts are in the Das Granthi. The first two are written in the Braj, or ancient Hindi dialect; while the Epic is written in Punjabi. All three run with the gore of the battles between Durga and the demons, possibly an allegory of the battles between good and evil. Ashta holds that Durga was an incarnation of Divine power, as symbolized by the Sword; and that the guru invoked her aid in the cause of deliverance to which he was called, and thus he founded the cult of *shakti* (power)<sup>1</sup>

In all three stories the buffalo-headed demon Mahakhasar does battle with the gods and defeats them. In the battle

Wounded are wandering about,  
Some are lying on the ground,  
Many are sobbing.

(Charitar I, 2:17)

The god Indra appeals to Chandi for help. She mounts her tiger and rides into the demon army. A bloody battle follows, and whoever are struck by her arrows "never even ask for water" but die instantly. Finally she kills the Buffalo Demon and then disappears.

Two notorious Daints (Demons), brothers named Sumbh and Nisumbh succeed to the rule and again the god Indar is defeated in battle with them. And what a battle it was!

The hair of the heads of the slain floated in a sea of blood  
like scum,

<sup>1</sup> Ashta, *The Poetry of the Dasam Granth*, p. 53.



The tips of chariots moved about in a froth;  
 Severed fingers writhed like fish, cut-off arms like snakes.  
 Horses' bodies moved like serpents, banners waved like  
 trees,  
 And in the sea of blood chariot wheels floated about in  
 whirlpools. (I:69)

The two Daints won, and increased in insolence until Demon Sumbh sent Dhrum Nain to ask—or demand—Chandi's hand in marriage. That started things! Dhrum Nain was killed in the battle that followed, and the demon army of infantry, cavalry, chariots, and elephants was burnt to a cinder by Chandi's wrath. Others are sent out to bring in Chandi, dead or alive, and other bloody battles follow, with Durga the Tiger Rider victorious in the end. In the battle with Rakat Bij (Blood Seed), each drop of blood falling on the ground produced another fully-armed Rakat Bij ready to continue the fight; so Kali, coming forth from Durga's forehead, helped by drinking up the blood. It hardly seems an overstatement to say of the bard who translated or wrote all this, "It is clear that he was largely tinctured with Hinduism."<sup>1</sup>

Near the end of Chandi Charitar I occur these well known lines, which sound as if the guru had inserted them himself in order to state the life purpose of the warrior-saint:

O Shiva, grant me this boon,  
 That I may never avoid doing a good deed,  
 Never fear the enemy when I go to battle,  
 But surely go on to victory;  
 That I may teach myself this greed alone,  
 To sing only of Thy praises.  
 And when the last days of my life come,  
 I may die fighting in some mighty battle.  
 The poetic story of Chandi related here  
 Is full of the lust of battle.

(I, 231, 232)

The Sikh commentator thus summarizes the purposes of this presentation of the story of Chandi:

It has been stated before that the entire story is imbued with the spirit of battle; and at that time in Bharata there was need of this spirit. For this reason the Guru, in translating

<sup>1</sup> Macauliffe, V, p. 80.



the Story of Chandi, accomplished the purpose of showing how the pure women of Bharata, fighting in bloody battles, saved their own faith (dharma). Now, too, the blood of these heroines is present in the veins of the people of Bharata, and only the incentive of duty is needed, when such bravery will arise of itself. For this reason, in another place this very purpose has been thus expressed, "There is no other desire than to arouse enthusiasm for righteous war."<sup>1</sup>

Vār Sri Bhagauti di, or Chandi di Vār, is in Punjabi. Ashta says it is the first *vār* of its kind in Punjabi dialect, and rates it as one of the finest Punjabi poems. In it images abound:

They range from the falling stars to the buffaloes locked together in combat; from hissing snakes to the bride's friends crowding round the bridegroom; lightning, the fruit-laden branch of a tree; clouds, showers, golden sand, the flowers of the pomegranate tree... The earth is trembling like a boat in a river. Arrows fall thick as heavy showers. Deadly bolts come hissing like snakes. Soldiers are locked in deadly combat like he-buffaloes. Kalika is compared to a buffalo in her wild charge. Soldiers cut down lie like logs of wood.<sup>2</sup>

The first verse of this *vār* is known as the Sikh prayer because it is always recited at the beginning of the *Ardās*, the special prayer of the Sikhs:

Having first remembered the Sword, meditate on Guru Nanak,  
Then on Guru Angad, Amar Das, and Ram Das; may they assist me!  
Remember Arjan, Har Gobind, and the holy Har Rai;  
Meditate on the holy Hari Krishan, a sight of whom dispelled all sorrows.  
Remember Teg Bahadur and the nine treasures shall come hastening to your homes.  
*Ye holy Gurus*, everywhere assist us!<sup>3</sup>

The current version adds:

May the Tenth Sovereign Holy Guru Gobind Singh be our help everywhere.

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Narain, *Stik*, p. 366.

<sup>2</sup> Ashta, *op. cit.* pp. 130-136.

<sup>3</sup> Macauliffe, V. pp. 294, 295.



## Gian Prabodh

### The Excellence of Wisdom

The author of the Gian Prabodh is probably Guru Gobind Singh, since "Patshahi 10" appears in the heading. It forms the concluding portion of the *Das Granthi*, and would take about an hour to read aloud.

It is a mixture of hymns of praise of the immortal in negative terms, like those in the Jap and Akal Ustat; and of pantheistic poetry, riddles, and stories from the Mahabharata. The riddles are dull. Atma Ram says to Parmatma, "Who is the strong-armed one that is unconditioned, indestructible, and has limitless splendour and marvellous power?" Parmatma correctly replies, "It is Brahma who has limitless splendour, is unconditioned and without desire, in whom there is neither difference, doubt, *karṇa*, nor death; who is merciful to friend and foe alike." Then follows a description of Brahma, all this being in the nature of a catechism.

The latter two-thirds is made up of stories from the Mahabharata. The tales of the Raja Yudhishtra, Arjan, Bhimsain, and Sahadev; their horse, elephant, and snake sacrifices; their gifts to Brahmins; their battles and their intrigues are told. At the end is the story of Ajit Singh, the son of a slave girl and the Raja. He was a peerless warrior, and pursued his two dissolute brothers to the ashram of a Sanaudhi Brahmin, who hid them. In revenge Ajit Singh and his followers, Khattris all, took the daughters of the Brahmins as wives, and so the race of Rajputs was born.

The sage tells them of the great Daint medh jagg (Demon's horse sacrifice) in honour of Durga, and advises them to offer up a similar sacrifice of Demons. On this strange note the Gian Prabodh ends, evidently in an unfinished state.

Regarding this strange book, much of which seems contrary to the guru's authentic teaching, Ashta observes:

The legendary history of these kings is a tissue of incidents probable and improbable, the lust for sex and revenge, conflicts and battles, intrigues and wholesale murder, forced marriages, and *niyog* (Levirite remarriage of widows), fratricide and fraud. The *rishis* are as guilty of unworthy conduct as kings, mothers no less than brothers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ashta, *op. cit.* pp. 73, 74.



## Chaubis Autar

### The Twenty-four Incarnations

There is doubt as to who the author or translator of these Hindu incarnation stories is. The author's name which is customarily inserted in the last line of the poetry (the *takhallas*) is "Syām the Poet." Opinion varies as to whether this is the *nom de plume* of Gobind Singh or the name of one of the fifty-two bards he had working for him at Anandpur.<sup>1</sup> In the face of such a statement as "the Khatri served the Brahmins" (Ram Autar vs. 838), and of the incident glorifying the Brahmin visitors, when Ram and Sita fell at the feet of these Brahmins who came to do them homage, then washed the feet of the Brahmins and drank of the water (Ram Autar vs. 697), it is hard to conceive of Guru Gobind Singh himself as being the translator.

The whole situation is paradoxical. None of the Sikh gurus used Hindu theology and mythology to the degree that Guru Gobind Singh does; yet none was so cynical or unmercifully satirical of Hindu practices as the tenth guru. We know that he sent five Sikhs to Banares to study Sanskrit and learn Hindu theology. These founded the Nirmala Order of Sikh sadhus, which seems contrary to the guru's teaching of the supremacy of the householder and the duty of every Sikh to earn his own living. The fifty-two bards must have produced a great mass of literature in the three or four years they were employed by him; and in addition much must have been inherited from the writers employed by the ninth guru, his father. It would be helpful to know more about these bards. Some must have been Hindus, and probably all had imbibed the culture and mythology of Hinduism, and the literature accessible to them would be mostly the copious Hindu classics. On this subject Macauliffe has this to say:

At that time it was the custom to recite on the eve of battle the praises and warlike deeds of the brave, so that the hearts even of cowards might be inspired with eagerness for the fray. On that account the tenth Guru maintained fifty-two bards to translate the Mahabharat, the Ramayan, and the gallant achievements of Ram, Krishan, Chandi, and others. It does not follow from this that the Guru

<sup>1</sup> Macauliffe, V, p. 80.



worshipped those whose acts were thus celebrated; this was done only for the purpose of inciting to bravery, dispelling cowardice, and filling the hearts of his troops with valour to defend their faith.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the account of Ram Autar is found a special blessing on those who hear and those who sing this story, and thanks are given to Bhagvat for help in completing the story of Ram Chander. The guru says he does not accept the opinions of the Puranas or of the Quran, nor the doctrines of the Smritis, Shastars, or Vedas. He disclaims any special knowledge of poetry or logic, but says he was only the mouthpiece of Aspāni, the Sword-Bearer himself. (Ram Autar, vs. 863). The religious message is that these incarnations come for the succour of the faithful and the destruction of their enemies.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Dharam Pal Ashta, a brilliant Hindu scholar and great admirer of the guru and his poetry, emphasizes this last point:

The Chaubis Autar reveals that Guru Gobind Singh has been deeply impressed by the idea which runs throughout the Puranic literature, the idea of a saviour appearing from time to time to destroy the unrighteousness and uphold the righteousness, to uproot some great evil and to establish some great good, to rescue the weak and the innocent, to protect the saints and the devotees, to dispel their sorrows and to shed favour on them and to lift them high in this world.<sup>3</sup>

There is some data regarding the two main stories. In the concluding section of the Ram Autar it is stated that the book was finished in the year 1755 Bikrami, A.D. 1698, in the month of Hār (June-July) on the bank of the Sutlej River near the foot of Naina Devi Mountain. The writer of the Krishna stories says that he has written 1192 verses at Anandpur, and the commentator adds that the remaining 1300 verses were written at Paonta. These incarnation stories occupy 554 pages of the Dasam Granth,

<sup>1</sup> Macauliffe, V, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> The same idea is expressed in the Bhagavad Gita 2:42. Cf. the similar call of Jeremiah the Hebrew prophet: "Before you were born I consecrated you...to all to whom I send you you shall go, and whatever I command you you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord. "See, I have set you this day over nations and kingdoms, to pluck and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." (The Book of Jeremiah, chap. 1, vs. 5-10). The tenth guru's call in the Vachitar Natak also comes to mind.

<sup>3</sup> Ashta, *op. cit.* pp. 73, 74.



or over one third of it. The most prominent stories are those of Ram and Sita, 66 pages, and of Krishna, 316 pages, leaving 172 pages for all the rest. None of them is included in the *Das Granthi*.

### The Incarnation<sup>1</sup>

The following brief summaries will show something of the nature of these stories. The fish autar rescues the Vedas from the ocean, where they were carried by the demon Sanġkh. A battle between the fish armies and the demon armies is described, with the huris (heavenly beauties) gloating in anticipation of many slain heroes. In the end the demons are, of course, defeated, and the Vedas rescued (vs. 41-54).

The tortoise autar supports the Mandarachal mountain while the gods and demons churn the ocean to secure the fourteen jewels in it.

In the Nar Narayan episode the demons are dissatisfied with the distribution of the loot from the churning, so another battle takes place between them and the gods,—a method of settling disputes that is ancient indeed.

Nar Singh battled for eight days and nights to rescue Prahlād from the wrath of Raja Hiranachh, and finally clawed the raja to death.

In the time of Paras Ram the Chhatris vexed the gods with their pride, so the gods complained that the demons had assumed the form of Chhatris. The Chhatris finally stole the calf of Kamdhenu, the Wonder Cow, and killed Paras Ram's father to boot. A battle follows in which the mighty warrior-Brahmin (the original soldier-saint) Paras Ram eventually kills the guilty rajas with an axe and finishes off the rest of the Chhatris soon after.

In the story of Rudr autar, the pressing population problem is solved when Rudr destroys enough wicked people to ease the situation.

<sup>1</sup>The twenty-four incarnations are: (1) The Fish, Machh; (2) The Tortoise, Kachh; (3) Nar, The Lion; (4) Narayan; (5) Maha Mohini; (6) The Boar; (7) Nar Singh, The Man-Lion; (8) Bāwan, the Dwarf; (9) Paras Ram; (10) Brahma; (11) Rudr; (12) Jalandhar; (13) Vishnu; (14) No name, probably a manifestation of Vishnu; (15) Arhant, the Jain; (16) Manu Raja; (17) Dhanantar, the Physician; (18) Suraj; Sun; (19) Chandra, the Moon; (20) Rama; (21) Krishna; (22) Nar, Arjan; (23) Bodh; (24) Kalki. A supplement follows with a brief mention of seven incarnations of Brahma, eight rajas of ancient times, and two incarnations, Parasnath and Dat.



Arhant autar was a Jain. He taught the people to cut off their long hair, with the result that their devotions were not acceptable. By teaching that no life should be taken he put an end to sacrificial ceremonies. He taught that there was no need of a creator, nor of ceremonial bathing; so the demons, who had begun to endanger the position of the gods by performing the vedic rites, became weak and were easily destroyed. Raja Manu was sent as an incarnation of Vishnu. He wrote the Manu Smriti, and so brought back the people from the delusions of Jainism.

Dhanantar saw that the people were prosperous, used too much *ghee* and rich food, and so suffered from indigestion. He wrote the Ayur Veda to remedy their ills.

The chariot of the sun autar was hindered by the demon Diragh Kaya. A battle followed, in which the sun's arrows finally won. Fields were burned up by the sun, women became rebellious and refused to serve their husbands or to do puja to the gods. Vishnu became the moon autar and smote the women with the arrows of love, so that they again served their husbands and did puja to the gods. However, Chandra (the moon) became proud and committed adultery with the wife of the Brahmin Brahaspati. Both Brahaspati and Gotam Muni cursed him, whence came the dark spots on the moon, and the waxing and waning from shame.

### Rama and Sita

The story of Rama and Sita is told at some length. One of the wives of Raja Dasrath (Ten Chariots) was Kekai, who obtained the raja's promise that her son should be raja in his stead. She had showed herself a woman of courage and devotion by driving the raja's chariot into battle when the charioteer was killed.<sup>1</sup> Later she showed her stubbornness by insisting that her son Bharat be made raja and that Rama be banished to the forests for fourteen years.

At Sita's *swayamvara* (self-choice) the condition for being chosen as Sita's husband was the stringing of Shiva's bow. The royal suitors all tried and failed. Then Rama strung it so vigorously that it broke in two. Thus he won the fair Sita. Paras Ram, when he heard this, became angry and did battle with Rama's army with his famous axe. He finally came face to face with

<sup>1</sup> Tale No. 102, *Pakhayan Charitar*.



Rama. Rama, being a Chhatri, did not wish to kill a Brahmin, so they parleyed. Finally Paras Ram said he would be satisfied if Rama could string and break his huge bow. Rama broke it in six pieces, and the warrior Brahmin and the Chhatri Rama became friends. There is a nice touch here. When Sita hears about this second bow-breaking she wonders if this means that Rama is winning another wife as he won her!

The story of Rama's banishment follows, in which Sita insists on accompanying him, along with the faithful Lakshman. Battles with various demons take place. Biradh was infatuated with Sita's beauty and Rama has to reckon with him. At last his minions come "with grass in their teeth" as a sign of surrender. Sūpnakha, Rawan's sister, was infatuated with Rama, who spurned her, so she tries to win Lakshman and quarrels with Sita. Finally Lakshman cuts off her nose! The demons fight a battle to avenge her, and this is described in all its gory details (vs. 339-347). Finally Rawan, the arch demon deceives Sita by becoming a deer, then a *yogi*. He carries her off to Lanka (Ceylon). In his anger, Rama burns up everything he sees or touches. Hanuman and his monkey army become his trusted allies. The battle of Lanka is joined, and occupies the next 253 verses. Once Sita was taken out by Rawan to see the dead Rama and his brothers; but instead of yielding to Rawan she revived them by a magic spell. Even so, after the victory and Rawan's death, Rama was jealous and subjected Sita to an ordeal by fire, which she successfully survived.

Many years later, at the insistence of the palace women, Sita draws a picture of the twenty-armed, nine-headed Rawan on the wall. When Rama sees it he again becomes jealous and is sure that Sita still cherishes love for Rawan. Sita calls upon the earth to swallow her up (Sita means furrow) and so she departs this world. Rama soon dies of remorse and grief. A perverse ending to such a fine story of conjugal love and devotion!

### Tales of Krishna

This forms the second longest section of the Dasam Granth. It opens, after the introductory statement about its composition, with verses in praise of the war goddess Durga. A council in heaven follows in order to devise some way to help free the world from the tyranny of the demons. Finally Vishnu(Hari)announces



that he will become incarnate as Krishna. So Krishna is born to Dewaki; but to save him from the wrath of Raja Kans his father takes him to Jashoda, queen of the milkmaids (gopis) in Gokul and, unknown to her, exchanges him for her daughter Maya. Kans in his wrath slays the children in his kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Krishna grows up as a cowherd there, and the usual story of his boyhood follows. He steals the *ghee* of the milkmaids of Gokul and feeds it to his companions and to the monkeys. He sucks the very life out of the evil demoness Punta who tries to kill him by applying poison to her breasts; but she obtains *mukti* (salvation) when she, dying, calls out Hari's name. When Krishna is accused of eating dirt his mother looks into his mouth and sees the whole universe there. As a lad, he performs heroic exploits as narrated in the Bhagavat Purana, such as killing the numerous demons sent by Kans to kill him and his fellow cowherders.

Krishna is a skilled flute player and singer.<sup>2</sup> He charms the gopis away from their homes and husbands and inflames them with passion for himself. To teach them a lesson in modesty he steals their clothes while they are bathing in the river. To regain them, he demands kisses and caresses (vs. 266). When the Brahmins of the city refuse to send food to Krishna and his friends he calls out their wives who gladly feast them all. He saves his friends from the wrath of Indar by holding a mountain over them as a shelter from the deluge. He and Balaram kill many demons and giants and perform numerous heroic exploits.

Radha, fairest of the gopis, appears on the scene. She and Krishna fall in love and he makes her his favourite mistress. No doubt all this is to be taken as an allegory of the soul's need for the love of God; but an incident like the following seems difficult to reconcile with this lofty purpose. After making violent love to Radha (Syam the poet remarks that Krishna enveloped Radha as the Demon Rahu does the moon at the time of an

<sup>1</sup> The similarity to the account of the slaughter of infants by King Herod in order to slay his prophesied rival, Jesus, is often discussed, with no agreement as to which story influenced the other. (The Gospel of Matthew, chap. 2, verse 16.)

<sup>2</sup> It may be of interest to note the variety of *ragas* (tunes) he is described as using: Sorath, Sarang, Gujri, Lalat, Bhairav, Dipak, Todi Megh Malhar, Suddh Malhar, Gaund, Jaitsari, Paraj, Sri Rag, Dhanasari, Kidara, Malwa, Bihagra, Maru, Kanra, Kalian, Kukabh, Bilaval, Palasi, Murchana, Bhim, Gauri, and Nat. Many of these are used in the Sikh Granths.



eclipse), the fickle Krishna tells the gopi Chandarbhaga that he loves her. Radha sees this and goes off to her home in anger. Krishna sends several of the gopis one after the other, including fair Chandarbhaga, to Radha to persuade her to return to him, but she refuses and says she will die first. At last Krishna goes to her himself and finally convinces her of his love; then he invites her to enjoy the fulfilment of love in the water of the Jamna. Away she goes, with Krishna in pursuit, and there in the water he seizes her (vs. 752). The *Encyclopedia of Sikh Literature* says that Guru Nanak thought this *Rās Līlū* to be subversive of good morals and condemned it thus:

Both the lad and the shapely one,  
 Krishna and Radha thus act out the play;  
 Man's mind becomes evil, watching her,  
 And excessive desire springs up in his body:  
 The lad then with the shapely one  
 Will without shame boldly have sexual enjoyment.  
 (P. 3072, note.)

Mighty battles with Kans and his demons follow, and Krishna goes off to Mathura. There he kills the dhobi who has the raja's clothing and distributes the garments among his own followers. Then follows the miracle when Krishna grasps Kubja, the hunch-back flower girl, by the chin and, placing his feet on hers, straightens out her deformed body.<sup>1</sup> Out of gratitude, she asks him to visit her house, which he later does, to the discomfiture of Radha. In the meantime, Krishna breaks the mighty bow of Kans and a bloody battle ensues. Krishna's heroism on the field of battle seems to be more in line with the main purpose, but here, too, Krishna hardly comes through unsullied. His enemies often charge him with winning his encounters by deceit; and in the fight with the mighty Satakrit Singh Krishna, being hard put to it, calls out to his opponent, "I will not strike you." Satakrit, taking him at his word, looks back, when Krishna quickly strikes him with his sword on the back of his neck and so cuts him down. In the next verse Krishna is said to have found great peace of mind from vanquishing his foes by this method! (vs. 1369). It will be remembered that this is the composition of the poet Syam; how much supervision the guru gave it we do not know.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Gospel of Luke 13:10-13, where Jesus straightens a deformed woman.



The twenty-fourth incarnation is Kalki, "The Spotless (Sinless) Incarnation." She is to come at the end of the Kali Yug, "the age of ignorance and spiritual darkness."<sup>1</sup> The world has fallen deep in sin: family life has broken up, castes are in confusion, religious sects multiply. Then, "To destroy all sin Kalki will come in the Kal Jug to establish righteousness" (vs. 154). A terrific battle with the forces of evil follows. Then:

Kalki at last became strong and proud, and the Lord was displeased, and created another Being. Mihdi Mir was created great and powerful, who destroyed Kalki, and became master of the world. All is in the hands of God. In this manner passed away the twenty-four manifestations.<sup>2</sup>

Near the end of the supplement on these incarnations is found this choice satire on Hindu ascetics:

If man obtain Jog (Yoga, Union) by dwelling in the forest,  
the bird ever dwelleth there.

The elephant ever throweth dust on his head; consider this  
in thy heart.

Frogs and fishes ever bathe at places of pilgrimage;

The cat, the wolf, and the crane meditate; what know they  
of religion?

As thou endurest pain to deceive men, do so for God's  
sake,

Thus shalt thou know great divine knowledge and quaff  
the supreme nectar.<sup>3</sup>

## Shabad Pātshāhī Das (Verses of the Tenth Sovereign)

There seems to be no reason to regard these verses as other than the tenth guru's own. The ten verses in the Granth may be part of a much larger collection, as they are called also Hazare Shabad, or The Thousand Verses.<sup>4</sup> They are included in the Das Granthi just after the opening Jāp, and would take perhaps five minutes to sing or read aloud. Several *rags* are used: Ramkali, for singing at dawn; Sorath, for midnight; Kalyan, for the first part of the night; Tilang Kafi, for afternoon; Bilawal, for noon

<sup>1</sup> Vs. 140. UNESCO *op. cit.* p. 278. "The present age is considered to be kaliyuga: 432,000 years. This Yuga began in February 3102 B.C."

<sup>2</sup> Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 369.

<sup>3</sup> Macauliffe, V, p. 314.

<sup>4</sup> Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 359.



in a joyous mood; and Devgandhari, four hours after sunrise. These verses exhort men to worship only the One God, and not His manifestations or His creation: "Worship none but the Creator, not the creation" (vs. 5). The true ascetic is to consider his home as the forest, and be an *udasi* (wanderer, perhaps) at heart; have continence instead of matted hair; and instead of uncut finger nails, daily religious duties; the Name is to be the ashes applied to the body. Referring to Krishna, the guru says, "Why should He whose form and colour are not known be called black? You will escape from the net of Death when you cling to His feet" (vs. 10).

Ashta mentions in this connection an example of *Sant Kavya* (Poetry in the Sant Tradition), namely the famous stanza among the Hazare Shabad which goes:

Go tell the Beloved Lord

The condition of his yearning disciples;

Without Thee, rich coverings are an agony to us,

And to live in the comforts of our households

Is like living with snakes! Our water pots

Have become like pikes on which men are impaled.

The cup we drink from has an edge like a dagger!

Beloved, Thy turning away from us

Is like what a beast endures from the slaughterer!

With the Beloved, a mattress of straw would please us;

Without Him, in rich houses, we are burned alive!

Hazare Shabad (Khial vs. 1)<sup>1</sup>

## Sawaiya

(Quatrains)

There are thirty-three of these four-line stanzas, which are said in the heading to be the tenth guru's own words. They are often recited during the preparation of the *amrit* to be used in baptism, (*pahul*, *amrit chakhna*), quite appropriately, as these lines show:

He who repeateth night and day the Name of Him

Whose light is unquenchable,

Who bestoweth not a thought on any but the one God;

Who hath full love and confidence in God,

Who putteth not faith even by mistake in fasting,

<sup>1</sup> Ashta, *op. cit.* p. 143. Here quoted from *Selections from the Sacred Writing of the Sikhs*, UNESCO, Part Two, p. 10.



Or *worshipping* cemeteries, places of cremation,  
 Or Jogis' places of sepulture;  
 Who only recognize the one God,  
 And not pilgrimages, alms, the non-destruction of life,  
*Hindu* penances, or austerities;  
 And in whose heart the light of the Perfect One shineth,  
 He is recognized as a pure *member of the Khalsa*.<sup>1</sup>

True and false religion are contrasted, with satirical references to Hindu ascetic practices and superstitions,—“The Unseen is not found by assuming garbs.”<sup>2</sup> Ashta likewise remarks that the theme here is divinity true and false. “The *yogis* and *sanyasis* and *masands* simply loot people without uplifting them spiritually.”<sup>3</sup>

The rapport between the guru and the Khalsa may be seen in this poem from the sawaiyas:

All the battles I have won against tyranny  
 I have fought with the devoted backing of these people;  
 Through them only have I been able to bestow gifts,  
 Through their help I have escaped from harm;  
 The love and generosity of these Sikhs  
 Have enriched my heart and my home.  
 Through their grace I have attained all learning;  
 Through their help in battle, I have slain all my enemies.  
 I was born to serve them, through them I reached eminence.  
 What would I have been without their kind and ready help?  
 There are millions of insignificant people like me.

True service is the service of these people;  
 I am not inclined to serve others of higher castes;  
 Charity will bear fruit, in this and the next world,  
 If given to such worthy people as these.  
 All other sacrifices and charities are profitless.  
 From top to toe, whatever I call my own,  
 All I possess or carry, I dedicate to these people!

(All this was in answer to a greedy Brahmin)

Hearing this the learned Brahman was ablaze.  
 Malice boiled in him and anger  
 Burnt as briskly as straw burns in flame.  
 He could not bear the thought  
 That by such levelling of castes

<sup>1</sup> Macauliffe, V, pp. 314, 315.

<sup>2</sup> P. 320.

<sup>3</sup> Ashta, *op. cit.* 145.



The Brahmans might lose their livelihood.  
 The Pundit wept and wailed  
 At the plight of his neglected order.

(UNESCO, *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, pp.10, 11.)

There are four more sawaiyas with which the Das Granthi closes. They form a prayer of praise and thanksgiving,—“The battles were won by His grace only” (vs. 2).

## Shastar Nām Mālā Purān

(Name-string of Weapons)

As its name implies, this is a list of weapons of war, which are praised as deliverers and protectors. Cunningham says that this is not Gobind Singh's composition, but does not give a reason for this statement. The book runs to 1318 verses and covers ninety-one pages in the Granth. The collection of so many pages of fanciful names for weapons and riddles about them must have been the work of zealous scribes. One cannot imagine the guru himself taking the time for so much laborious and often trivial compilation. The various weapons are given fanciful names. Among the simpler of these are names for arrows: Bow-roarer, Skin-piercer, Deer-slayer. The opening verse sets the mood:

The three kinds of swords are sure and friendly deliverers,  
 Finishers of the enemy, armor-piercers,  
 They make sure our protection.

Many of these names of weapons are listed in the form of those riddles so dear to the Punjabi heart. These seem to be resolved in somewhat devious ways,—for example:

Think hard and take the word *tarangani* (stream),  
 Then say *ja char* (grass-eater), then think of the word *naik*  
 (lord)  
 At the end say the word *satru* (enemy)—  
 Lo! Good friend, you have thought of the word meaning  
*tupak* (gun).<sup>1</sup>

The reasoning seems to be that each thing mentioned is the enemy of the next: the grass eater is the deer (*jā* is what is produced by the moisture of the stream, *char* is to graze); the lord and master of the deer is the tiger; the enemy of the tiger is the gun. There is

<sup>1</sup> Kosh, Mahan, p. 403.



quite a store of similar riddles in this arsenal. On the bow and the arrow there are 177 of these riddles, vs. 75-252; on the combat-lasso, 207 riddles, vs. 253-460; on the gun, 857 riddles, vs. 461-1318, indicating possibly an interest in the more modern weapons of destruction. The value of these riddles in keeping up interest in weapons of war is obvious, even if their place in a book of holy Scripture is not.

## Pakhyan Charitar (Tales of the Wiles of Women)

These tales form the longest portion of the Granth, 40% of it. The compiler is not known, although the poet Syam is given as the writer of some of them. The *Encyclopedia of Sikh Literature* has this to say about the occasion for the telling of these stories:

In the Introduction to this book it is related how an Apsara (Water Nymph), seeing Raja Chitr Singh's handsome form, became infatuated and making a liaison with him gave birth to an attractive son, Hanuwant Singh. Chitramati, the Raja's newly wedded Rani, seeing Hanuwant's incomparable form, became enamored of him and tried to entice the prince to immorality; but the righteous Hanuwant gave a sharp denial to his step mother. At this the Rani, making false accusations to her husband, caused him to give the order to put the son to death.

The Raja's wise adviser, by telling his master many tales of the wiles of intriguing women, tried to dispel his doubt about the prince. Some of these stories were taken from old Hindu books, some from the Book of Spring-time Wisdom, others from Mogul family stories, from collections of tales from Rajputana, from stories and tales of the Punjab, and others from the Guru's own experience. The moral is this, that one should not become entangled in the intrigues of wily women by becoming slaves to lust, nor by trusting them effect one's own destruction. This does not mean that it is wrong to trust one's own wife or worthy women, but it is bad practice to lose this world and the next by becoming enamored of strange women and entrapped in their wiles(p. 2190).

The date of the completion of the compilation of these tales is given in the last verse as July 1753 Bikrami, or A.D. 1696. The place named is the bank of the Sutlej, probably at Anandpur.

Tale one is really an invocation of the goddess Kali, before whom "enemies fade as stars before the rising sun" as she dashes



into battle riding her tiger. This is a spectacular beginning to a series of stories dealing largely with women. There are 404 of these tales, which fall into categories somewhat as follows: Tales of the bravery, devotion, or intelligence of women, 78 in number; the deceitfulness and unscrupulousness of women, 269 stories; the deceitfulness of men, 26 stories; moral stories on the folly of gambling, drinking, opium-eating, sometimes, even in praise of these, 10 stories; and folk tales, 19 in number. The commentator, Giani Bishan Singh of Khalsa College, Amritsar, expresses pain at the inclusion of stories praising opium eating. He is sure the guru has not sanctioned Tale Number 245, in which the merits and demerits of opium are discussed between a woman and her bania husband, to the advantage of the merits as leading to bravery in battle and liberality in giving to the needy! The Giani says, "In this Tale opium eating is proved to be good. Enough! For this reason the Tenth Granth is said to be the work of the 52 poets. In place after place opium is praised; but the Guru in his instructions forbade it, while here it is praised."<sup>1</sup> With regard to Tale 266 he is even more outspoken. In this, the daughter of a raja is sent to study with a pandit. She, by her arguments against worshipping idols, converted him to the true worship of Parmeshur, but this tale gives another reason for the conversion:

At the end of this story it is written that she accomplished this by giving him opium and liquor. From such things it is plain that the poetry in these Tales is the work of some excessive opium-eating poet who in place after place in the Dasam Granth praises opium eating. To call these Tales the work of the Guru is a great sin. The Guru couldn't have written these stories.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the tales of the heroism of women are creditable, if not always credible. When the charioteer of Raja Dasrath is killed, the Rani Kekai drives his chariot into the thick of the battle to final victory (Tale 102). Similarly, Dropati rescues the unconscious Arjan and put his enemies to flight (137). Another story tells how Bir Mati, the wife of a merchant, saved his wealth by killing or taking prisoner, single-handed, all the members of a robber band. She then converted the leader into a holy man (176).

<sup>1</sup> Giani, Bishan Singh, *Commentary on the Dasam Granth*, Vol. VI, p. 2 of the Table of Contents.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 379.



A recurring theme is the necessity for hiding the "friend" when the husband returns unexpectedly. On one such occasion the woman quick-wittedly breaks her necklace and scatters its jewels in the courtyard below. She calls down to her husband to gather them up, and as he does so she has a chance to spirit away the other man (364).

Several thrusts are made at Hindu pilgrimages. These seem to offer an ideal chance for liaisons; in fact, the Sikh commentator remarks that "It seems plain that on pilgrimages there is every opportunity for sexual immorality"<sup>1</sup> (360, 138, 337, 398). Similarly a visit to a Hindu temple often offers similar opportunity, and sometimes a woman's loud proclamation of her intention of a night vigil at a temple is the agreed signal for a liaison (146, 213, 283). The guises of *sadhus*, *faqirs*, and *yogis* are often useful for deceptive purposes (226, 271, 362).

Men come in for at least a small share of the blame of being deceivers, as when a young man imposed himself on a widow as a prospective son-in-law. She rejoiced in the thought of a possible grandson and feasted the young man well. After a year passed this way, the youth eloped with the widow's daughter. When she complained to the town officials, they did not believe her story, but looted her of her possessions (76).

Anup Kaur was among the bravest. She was a servant in the guru's household, and was captured while crossing the river in the night flight from Anandpur. She resisted all attempts on her honour by the Khan of Malerkotla who had captured her, and finally, rather than yield, she stabbed herself to death. This seems to be more in harmony with the high regard Sikhs usually have for women than most of these tales are.

Among the folk tales are love stories of Radha and Krishna; Rukmini and Krishna; Aurangzeb's sister; and Yusuf and Zulaikha (another version of Joseph and Potiphar's wife).<sup>2</sup>

These tales of the deceitfulness of women have an Arabian Nights flavour. One might expect to hear them in the barrack-room or around army camp fires. Few of them seem fit for a religious book; indeed, some of them are unprintable. The general theme seems to be that most women will stop at nothing—

<sup>1</sup> Giani, Bishan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 542.

<sup>2</sup> The versions from the Dasam Granth, the Quran, and the Bible are given in the translations.



slander, arson, murder—to obtain their heart's desire; that men are helpless in their clutches; and if men spurn them or frustrate their designs they have to reckon with the wildest and deadliest of enemies: but that, conversely, some women are the staunchest of allies, and think nothing of sacrificing their lives for their beloved.

The closing verses of the book of tales of women show the confused nature of its compilation. They seem to be the guru's own verses. They have no connection with the preceeding tales, are in the form of prayer and praise, and seem to reflect the religious climate of those times, with a deep personal faith, a great love for the Khalsa, and imprecation on enemies—one thinks of some of the Psalms of King David:

Give me Thy hand for protection;  
The desire of my heart is fulfilled  
When my mind seeks refuge in Thee.  
Support me as Thy slave.  
Destroy all my enemies,  
Give me Thy hand, and save me.

From the beginning to the end there is only one Incar-  
nation,  
Him only know to be my Guru.<sup>1</sup>

In the suffering of the saints Thou dost suffer,  
In the joy of the righteous Thou dost rejoice.  
Thou knowest the pain of each one.  
And the secret of each being Thou understandest.

Now be my Protector,  
Save the Sikhs, destroy their enemies.  
As many evil men as cause horror,  
All such Malechas destroy in battle.

Thou Whose sign is the dagger,  
I am at Thy feet.  
Give me Thy hand and save me,  
In every place be my Helper,  
And save me from the evil and deceitful.

(Verses 377, 378, 385, 388, 394, 401.)

<sup>1</sup> Many Christians in India apply this to Christ as the only true incarnation, but Kal, the God of Death, is the one referred to in the first part of the verse. Similarly with regard to Isa which is the Quranic name for Jesus in verse 374. He is the One with the Sword for his Sign, Asiket, an epithet of the immortal Siva in his warlike aspect.



## Hikāyat (Persian Stories)

The concluding sections of the Dasam Granth are in the Persian language. These stories follow the Zafarnāma, or Epistle of Victory, and so end the Granth; but logically they should follow the tales of women as they are much the same; in fact, they are Persian versions of the Charitar Pakhyān, for the most part.

The Hikayats are eleven in number, and cover twenty-eight pages. None bears the guru's signature, although all have the salutation of the Khalsa, *Wāh Gurū Jī kī Fatah*. The Persian used is said to be very good, and all are rhymed. They are supposed to contain moral instruction for the Emperor Aurangzeb.

Hikayat Number Two<sup>1</sup> is about the raja's four sons who were tested to determine their fitness to rule. The three elder sons were given thousands of elephants, horses, and camels. These they lost or squandered away. The youngest son was given a kernel and a half of gram which he planted, and from the harvest he was able to buy thousands of elephants, horses, and camels, and to build the cities of Delhi and Mungipatam besides. The moral seems to be the wisdom of relying on the power of God to produce wealth. Number three is, logically enough, a description of the perfect ruler, who fears God and no one else.

Hikayat Four is Charitar 52 given in Persian, the tale of the redoubtable Bachhitramati who would not take "No" for an answer to her proposal of marriage, but thoroughly defeated the obdurate Raja Subhat Singh in battle, and then married him. The appropriateness here is not obvious, but it is a good story.

Hikayat Five is Charitar 267 in Persian guise. The beauty of the young wife of a Qazi was such that her reflection turned water into wine. She became enamoured of Raja Sabal Singh and offered to share her throne with him; but he, to put her off, says she must kill the Qazi first. She goes off and kills the Qazi in his sleep and brings the bloody head to the raja; but then Sabal fears a similar fate at her hands and rejects her offer. She leaves the head lying there and returns to raise the alarm. People follow the bloody trail to where Sabal is sitting. The Emperor Jahangir

<sup>1</sup> In the Granth the Zafarnama proper is numbered one and the last story twelve, thus making them all parts of the Zafarnama and keeping the Persian section as a unit.



turns him over to the murdered man's widow. She winks at him, then pretends to start on a pilgrimage to Mecca, but turns back after dark to go and live with Raja Sabal Singh.

Number six tells how the daughter of a Qazi (those Muslim judges produced amazing daughters !) rescues Raja Chakarwati from his enemies. Number seven is the account of Raja Darab who was put in a trunk and set adrift on the river by his mother, the Rani of Rome. He was rescued and brought up by a dhobi. Later, his mother recognizes his identity by the ruby ring she had put in the trunk with him.

Hikayat Eight is the counterpart of Charitar 118. It describes how a beautiful mother kills her two grown sons because her lover feared them. She then becomes a *fakirni* (a female Muslim ascetic) but the God Shiva appears to her and grants her the boons of renewed youth and a meeting with her lover.

Hikayat Nine is supposed to come from France. It is Charitar 290 in Persian garb. A rani dresses her lover as a woman and keeps him (her) with her night and day,—especially since the raja also has become interested in this youthful sitar player. In number ten Roshan Dimagh, the daughter of a Wazir, leads an army in battle with the Raja of Mayindra, captures him, and takes over his kingdom.

Hikayat Eleven is one of the best known. It is Charitar 246. The daughter of a money lender steals the emperor's famous horses from the imperial palace in Delhi. This will be translated later.

In Hikayat Twelve the series reaches a climax of horror in the story of the Pathan woman who, out of fear for her husband, kills her lover, cooks him, and serves him up as a special feast to her hungry husband and friends, thus winning his approval by her wifely devotion. He then goes and kills the informer. The commentator draws from this a lesson for Aurangzeb in the necessity of having his officials make careful inquiry before condemning anyone.

Each of these eleven stories opens with praises to God, and ends with a command to the cup-bearer to bring a cup of wine, usually green, possibly a play on the name of Hari, which means "green." With these artistically styled poems with their Sufi flavouring, the Granth of the tenth guru ends.



## The Zafarnama (The Epistle of Victory)

The Zafarnama, or Epistle of Victory, was written, paradoxically enough, in the dark hour of defeat. The guru had fled to the South Punjab, when a summons came to see the Emperor Aurangzeb in Delhi. The reply is this message from the guru to the emperor. It is written in the Persian language, rhymed Persian at that, but in Gurmukhi letters. There seems to be general agreement that this letter was written by the guru himself from Dina in the southern Punjab in February, 1705.

These two men were destined to play an important part in shaping the India of the eighteenth century. Both were deeply religious men according to their faiths. Aurangzeb was an orthodox Muslim ; Gobind Singh was a staunch Sikh.

Of Aurangzeb we read that he was a strict Sunni ascetic, and followed the law and the traditions of Islam in every detail. He fasted often, and knew the whole Quran by heart ; yet his religious beliefs had little effect on his official life, for "his reliance on mere cunning as the principal instrument of statecraft testified to a certain smallness of mind, and was, moreover, ineffective in practice."<sup>1</sup>

One has but to read the guru's Jap or Akal Ustat to glimpse the depth and exaltation of his conception of God, and in the Vachitar Natak we see how his whole life was shaped by God's call to deliver and teach his people. Aurangzeb was emperor by force of arms over hundreds of millions ; while Guru Gobind Singh held spiritual sway over perhaps a lakh of Khalsa brothers. One ruled over all India ; the other had a precarious hold over a small part of the eastern Punjab ; in fact, it is doubtful if the guru was ever able to visit Amritsar, so extensive was the Mughal rule.

Something of the emperor's power may be gathered from a description of his camp in the Deccan given by an Italian lawyer about 1700. Aurangzeb's camp had in it 500,000 people, was 30 miles in circumference, and had 250 separate bazaars, where goods from the most mediocre to the most luxurious was for sale.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Oxford History of India*, 3rd edition, pp. 423-425.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford History*, p. 423.



At the time of their confrontation the guru's army had been largely destroyed. His family was scattered. His two older sons had been killed in the last stand at Chamkaur ; his two younger sons cruelly murdered by the Wazir of Sarhind. He himself had to flee in exile to the South of India, and was never again to visit the Punjab. Yet his faith in God's call never wavered ; and in his darkest hour he wrote in answer to the emperor's summons to come to him in Delhi, the Zafarnama, or Letter of Victory.

The Zafarnama is mainly a homily on keeping one's word. The guru upbraids Aurangzeb for breaking his oath taken on the Quran. This refers to the treachery of his generals in the Battle of Anandpur when, after promising safe conduct to the guru's forces for leaving the city, they attacked and looted the baggage train, only to find that the guru had anticipated treachery, and filled the baggage sacks with rubbish. They repeated their perfidy in the final evacuation under "safe-conduct." He calls the emperor "Paiman Shikan", "Oath Breaker," and invites him to come and meet him at Kangar, assuring him of a safe journey, since the people of the Bairag tribe are ruled by the guru—a subtle allusion to the Anandpur "safe-conduct." Final vengeance is in God's hands, before whom even the emperor must stand and give account. In this rebuke, one is reminded of King David's test of a godly man as "He who speaks the truth from his heart, who swears to his own hurt, and does not change."<sup>1</sup>

The last days of the emperor were sad, and, in contrast to the hope in victory that buoyed up the guru, he felt that life had only offered him defeat. He wrote to his sons :

"I know not who I am, where I shall go, or what will happen to this sinner... My years have gone by profitless. God has been in my heart, yet my darkened eyes have not recognized his light... There is no hope for me in the future... The army is confounded, and without heart or help, even as I am; apart from God, with no rest for the heart... I have greatly sinned and know not what torment awaits me."

The sternest critic of the character and deeds of Aurangzeb can hardly refuse to recognize the pathos of these la-

<sup>1</sup> The Bible, Psalm 15.



mentations or to feel some sympathy for the old man on his lonely deathbed.<sup>1</sup>

We are told in the *Mahan Kosh* that the guru wrote to the emperor "loving advice" and that the old man was moved by this letter. It brought some comfort to him in his last days, and that from one whom he had cruelly wronged. Another writer tells us that as a result :

He sent peremptory orders to the Punjab Subas to stop molesting the Guru any further and to let him live where it suited him.. He sent special messengers to the Guru asking him to come and see him so that he might have an opportunity of making amends for what had happened. Though warned by many disciples for placing any reliance on the treacherous old monarch the Guru accepted the invitation. The ladies were sent to Delhi. With a reduced following the Guru immediately started for the Deccan where Aurangzeb was then engaged in quelling disturbances.<sup>2</sup>

So the ruler of the world went down to defeat in spite of all that worldly pomp and strict observance of ascetic religious rites could give him ; while the tenth guru, ruler of a spiritual empire in the hearts of his people left to the Khalsa an unshaken faith in their destiny and a legacy of hope in final victory. Referring to the emperor's efforts to subdue the Khalsa, the guru wrote :

What kind of bravery is this,—

To silence the embers, which only crackle louder and burst forth into a mightier flame ?

(Zafarnama vs. 79)

The guru's philosophy of life might well be summed up in these verses of his :

Grant me this boon O God, from Thy Greatness,  
May I never refrain from righteous acts ;  
May I fight without fear all foes in life's battle,  
With confident courage claiming the victory !  
May my highest ambition be singing Thy praises,  
And may Thy Glory be grained in my mind !  
When this mortal life reaches its limits,  
May I die fighting with limitless courage !

(Epilogue to Chandi Charitar I)<sup>3</sup>

Thus speaks a true warrior-saint.

<sup>1</sup> *Oxford History*, p. 426.

<sup>2</sup> Singh, Bhagat Lakshaman, *Guru Govind Singh*, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO, *Sacred Writing of the Sikhs*, p. 274.



## CHAPTER IV

### The Two Granths

Among the writings of the Dasam Granth these are usually considered to be the guru's own compositions : the Jap, Akal Ustat, Vachitar Natak, Chandi Charitar I and II, Var Bhagauti kī, Gian Prabodh, Hazare Shabad and Sawaiyas, and the Zafarnama. The others were probably the work of the bards, namely : (Chaubis Autar (including the stories of Rama and Sita, and of Krishna), Shastar Nam Mala, Pakhyān Charitar, Hikayat. These may have had the general supervision of the guru, who sometimes added verses of his own to them, as at the end of the tales of women. Thus, the guru's authentic compositions would cover only about 168 pages out of the 1428 in the Granth as Bhai Mani Singh compiled it. The guru, on the evidence of his own writings, was mainly interested in worship and war ; and, indeed, from the warlike aspect of the immortal before whom he bowed, there was little difference between worship and war, as either could lead to heaven. The preponderance of women and their doings comes mainly in the translations of the bards. They are typical of the thoughts of men during the rigours and dangers of war.

### Comparison With the Ad Granth

The Ad Granth was compiled by the fifth guru Arjan in 1604 from hymns of praise written by himself, the four preceding gurus, and a number of *bhagats* or holy men, making some twenty-five writers altogether. The hymns of the Ad Granth are arranged according to tune and meter with subject matter scattered throughout without special regard to logical sequence.<sup>1</sup> The aim is to obtain peace of mind and union with God by meditating on the Name. This is the authentic Granth of both Sikhs and Singhs since it is the book Guru Gobind Singh is said to have appointed to the guruship in his place. The Dasam Granth

<sup>1</sup> Bhai Mani Singh was once cursed by the Khalsa for rearranging the Ad Granth according to authors.



is the authentic book of the Nihangs<sup>1</sup> and Akalis mainly. The official book of worship and discipline does not mention the Dasam Granth but says their Scripture is the Guru Granth Sahib (the Ad Granth) and "the words of all ten Gurus."<sup>2</sup>

The most striking similarity, superficially, is that of the length of these two Granths. The Dasam Granth, with exactly the same size page and type as the Ad Granth, has 1428 pages of text, while the Ad Granth has 1430 pages. This seems strange; and one wonders if there was a deliberate attempt to equalize the length of the two books.

In general, both Granths accept Hindu theology of the contemplative *bhakti* type, with a personal God who offers salvation by grace to those who meditate on his name. Both express boundless wonder at the Creator and his universe. Guru Nanak's God, however, is the God of truth while Guru Gobind Singh's emphasis is on the immortal God, deathless and unchanging. Both reject Hindu practices such as pilgrimages, the sacred thread, caste, asceticism and especially idolatry. Both seem at times to be tinged with Hindu pantheism, and with Muslim ideas of the absoluteness of God, and of fatalism. Both take for granted *karma* and transmigration. Both use the vernacular, and both are rhymed poetry.

Their main difference is that of purpose. The Ad Granth aims at peace of mind, the Dasam Granth at readiness for war. The Ad Granth does not contend with such shatterers of the peace as desperate, intriguing women, or battle scenes that run with blood. The following verses from Guru Arjan's Sukhmani (Peace of Mind) may be taken as typical of the spirit of the Ad Granth :

The occupation of devotees is with the Name,  
To the heart of the saints it gives rest.  
Hari's Name is the shelter of His servants,  
By Hari's Name millions have been saved.  
Saints utter the praise of Hari day and night,  
The pious use Hari's Name as medicine.  
The Harijan has the treasure of Hari's Name,  
The Supreme Brahma gave this gift to man.

<sup>1</sup> Devotees, often fanatical, of the tenth guru. The Nihangs especially go about armed with swords, spears, daggers, and shields and wear blue and yellow uniforms with high turbans laced with steel discs.

<sup>2</sup> *Sikh Rahit Maryada* (Punjabi), "Definition of a Sikh," p. 10.



Those whose souls and bodies are dyed in the colour of the  
 One,  
 Nanak, their minds have discernment.  
 (Sukhmani 2:5)

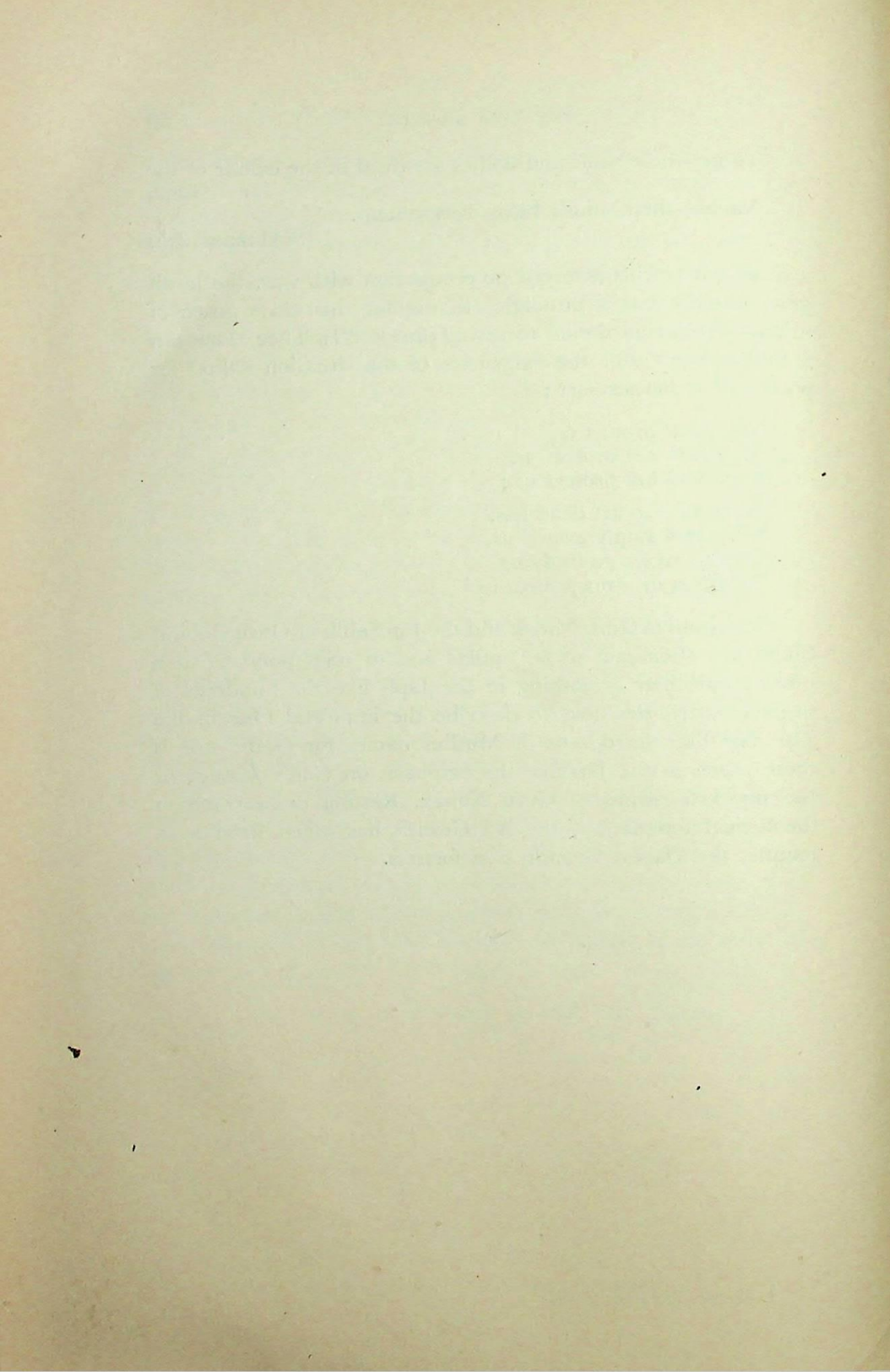
In spite of his enforced preoccupation with war, the tenth guru likewise has a nostalgic longing for this same peace of mind, as shown in the oft recurring phrase, "In Thee alone can I find refuge." But the exigencies of the situation called for poetry of a sterner sort :

May *Akal* protect us,  
 May *Sarb Loh* protect us,  
 May *Sarb Kal* protect us ;  
 O Thou who art deathless,  
 Who hast amply armed us,  
 To Whom we go in dying,  
 Do Thou in arms protect us.<sup>1</sup>

The Japji of Guru Nanak and the Jāp Sahib of Guru Gobind Singh are often said to be similar and to correspond to each other ; but there is nothing in the Japji like the hundreds of negative attributes used to describe the immortal One in the Jāp, nor like the dozens of Muslim names for God ; nor is there much in the Jāp like the emphasis on God's *Hukam*, or the mystical realms of Guru Nanak. Resting on a common theological foundation, the Ad Granth has taken form as a temple, the Dasam Granth as a fortress.

<sup>1</sup> Archer, *The Sikhs*, p. 202.







## CHAPTER V

### The Hukam Namas

These written orders, or requests, of the Sikh gurus are source material of historical importance and human interest. Hundreds of these must have been written and sent out by the gurus and their families ; but due to religious persecution, feuds and internal dissensions only about a hundred are known to exist at present. These Hukam Namas are orders or requests from the gurus to congregations or individuals for financial or material help, invitations to meet the guru at some festival often, or to come armed with horse and footmen to meet some emergency, or warnings against such dissenters as the *masands*. We have a few of these documents from the sixth and seventh gurus, but most of them are from the ninth and tenth gurus. The turbulent century between Guru Arjan and Guru Teg Bahadur must have taken heavy toll of these writings. These short notes, written by the gurus themselves, or, in the case of Guru Gobind Singh, dictated to a scribe, and bearing their "signs," take us behind the scenes and show something of the internal working of the Sikh congregations (*sangats*), as they faced the conditions and problems of their day. These Hukam Namas reveal religious, political, social, literary, and economic conditions in the intimate way letters do.<sup>1</sup>

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries documents were not ordinarily signed by names. Formulas or "signs" were written, usually at the top. For example, copies of the Granth Sahib were often brought to the guru who "signed" them by writing the opening verse across the top at the beginning of the book. The original Granth at Kartarpur is thus signed by Guru Arjan.

In the Hukam Namas of the tenth guru, Gobind Singh, an elaborate special formula is used. In those days the Persian letter S (*sowād*) was used. It stands for "sahi" or "correct."

<sup>1</sup> Except where indicated this material is taken from the book "Hukam Nāme" in Gurmukhi Punjabi by Dr. Ganda Singh.



At the top of the tenth guru's Hukam Namas are one or two daggers ; to their left is a dot (bindī) and to their right two dots and/or a hyphen :— 11. .— . Beneath are two horizontal lines, and below them a small figure 1 followed by one or more S's. Then two more lines and below them a large 1 (standing for *Ikk Oankar*, the One Formless Being) then two or more R's and a dot. Then come two more horizontal lines and an abbreviated statement of the request being made, as for example "1) s bh," Punjabi for "send one tola of Gold." Then follows the full note as dictated to the scribe.

The tenth guru seems to have had a regular office where records and copies of the Hukam Namas were kept. These were dated, sometimes numbered, and the number of lines in each noted in order to prevent any tampering. The topics included instructions about preaching ; the needs of the *langers* or free kitchens, communication between the guru and the *sangats* ; reconciliation between factions ; calls to arms, or in happier times, invitations to come to meet the guru, and warnings against the *masands*.

Historical problems are sometimes solved by a Hukam Nama. One Hukam Nama dated Oct. 21, 1706, asks for two teams of good oxen as the guru is going South, where the new emperor was ; and invites Sikhs to accompany him. A year later the Hukam Namas of Oct. 2, 1707 tells of the satisfactory talks the guru had with the Emperor Bahadur Shah, and the robe of honour and jewelled necklace worth Rs. 60,000 he received from the emperor. He summons the Khalsa to meet him at Anandpur where he plans to return shortly. It would seem evident that the guru's purpose in going south with the emperor was peace and reconciliation between the Khalsa and the Muslims, and not the fomentation of rebellion as has sometimes been alleged. The guru sometimes got impatient at the delays of his messengers, for in one Hukam Nama asking for monetary help he directs that if the messenger dallies, throw him out of the congregation and send by another.<sup>1</sup>

Economic conditions comes to light in the material asked for : Dacca—weapons, swords, shields, cloth, war elephants ; Banares—cloth ; Bhai Rupa in Malwa, South Punjab—oxen,

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Ganda, *Hukam Nāme*, p. 32, cf. Gopal Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, 62.



camels ; Patna—spices, strong cloth, nawar, turbans, sarahis (clay water jars), cups, talking birds, special pigeons ; Lucknow—cannon and their equipment. The fluctuations of money values is shown by the comparison of two Hukam Namas. One was written in 1700, a time of comparative peace, when 1 tola of gold was worth Rs. 12 ; but in the one written in 1707, a time of political unrest, a tola was quoted at Rs. 20. Many times the sending of money or gold by *hundī* is directed. A *hundī* is a banker's draft, so this would indicate a developed banking system, even in those turbulent times.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this is not so strange as it may at first seem, for, since the taking of usury was forbidden to Muslims, the banking business was largely in the hands of the Hindus, and possibly of some of the wealthier Sikhs.

The close filial relationship between the guru and his Sikhs is shown by the way in which the guru calls on them by name. It is said that his messengers and the messages were received with great honour by the congregations. The guru calls them "His Khalsa, His Very Own, His Joy," and sends them his blessings. Their liberality and their devotion to their guru is shown in their response, for, except in the siege of Anandpur, there is no record of destitution in the guru's camp. Often a Hukam Nama ends with the instruction to give the messenger Rs. 5 or more.

The forthrightness with which the guru attacks the *masands* is a tribute to his integrity and courage. Once he was convinced of their perfidy he called upon his Khalsa to avoid their fellowship and especially to refuse to give them money or offerings of any kind. These *masands* had originally been appointed by the fifth guru Arjan as missionaries and stewards, in order to keep in touch with the spreading congregations of Sikhs. Perhaps during the extended absence of the sixth guru they became greedy for wealth and power as the offerings of the faithful poured into their hands. It is possible that they wished to take over the guardianship of the youthful Gobind Rai, and so they may have had a hand in the arrest and martyrdom of his father Guru Teg Bahadur.<sup>2</sup> At any rate, many of them were supporters of Dhir Mal, elder brother of Teg Bahadur, and so harassed

<sup>1</sup> This would seem to be a promising field for more research.

<sup>2</sup> Grewal and Bal, *Guru Gobind Singh*, pp. 28, 40.



that peace-loving soul that he left Kiratpur to found Makhawal (Anandpur). Even there the *masands* opposed him, so he departed with his family for far-off Dacca. He left the family at Patna where Gobind Rai was born. The sagacious Kirpal, uncle of Gobind, eventually won the guardianship and commenced a careful course of training for the future Guru Gobind Singh. The corruption of the *masands* must have come into this course of training.

After seeing a clever drama satirizing the *masands* Guru Gobind Singh decided to abolish the institution and develop direct communication with the *sangats*. One cannot help but wonder if Uncle Kirpal's hand was not in the staging of this drama. Hukam Nama after Hukam Nama sternly warns the Sikhs to have nothing to do with the *masands*, men or women, and especially not to give them offerings. One modern historian states that, in the view of Saina Pat, one of the Guru's 52 bards, "the creation of the Khalsa was directed primarily against the *masands* who had been the mediating agency between a large number of Sikhs and their Guru. In fact the 'purification of the world' is equated by Saina Pat with 'the removal of the *masands*.'"<sup>1</sup> Likewise Jaya Thadani saw nothing but evil in this once honourable order: "Moreover the *Masands*, or 'parish priests' established by the early Gurus to preach the Sikh faith and collect tribute had become corrupt and power-loving, each striving to be a little Guru on his own."<sup>2</sup>

After the *masands* had been thoroughly discredited, the guru's characteristic desire for reconciliation again comes to the fore. In no less than six Hukam Namas written in 1702 we find instructions to the *sangats* to receive back into the fold any Sikhs who wished to be reconciled, and not to trouble them further. Dr. Ganda Singh believes this included repentant *masands* as well as others who might have stumbled at the guru's demolition of caste in the Khalsa.<sup>3</sup>

The Hukam Nama dated Nov. 4, 1700, is described by Dr. Ganda Singh, as typical. It may be translated as follows:

Keep an offering jar in every home.

4 November 1700

(The Guru's Sign)

700

<sup>1</sup> Grewal, J. S., *The Tenth Master*, Tributes on Centennary, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, Thadani, Jaya, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> Singh, Ganda, *Hukam Name*, p. 28.



(As dictated to the scribe :)

In the Name of One God, the True Guru—

This is the Guru's order. The Guru will protect the entire congregation of Patan Farid. Let the sangat meditate on the Guru and its life will be blessed.

The whole sangat is my Khalsa. Whatever is collected for the Guru is not to be given to any masand.

Whichever Sikh comes to the Guru, let him bring it himself. Whoever cannot come, let him keep it. Then when the Guru's written order comes let him execute a banker's draft and send it. This is my wish, that the one tola of gold requested be sent by bank draft by the congregation. It is my wish that whoever fulfils this request shall prosper. 9 lines.

Let the entire sangat put on their weapons and come together for the Holi festival. They will rejoice. 11 lines.

Do not give the offerings for the Guru to anyone. When you come then bring them yourself to the Guru; but the Guru's Sikhs must not associate with any masand, man or woman.

Whoever obeys this order will have his heart's desires fulfilled. This is my wish. 14 lines.

### The Tenth Guru's Hukam Namas

The 33 extant Hukam Namas of Guru Gobind Singh as listed by Dr. Ganda Singh are translated here to show the nature of the orders given, and the geographical spread of organized Sikhism in those days :

A summons to Bhai Mihr Chand of Rupa (South Punjab) to come without delay. Undated.

A request to the Sikhs of Bhai Rupa for oxen, buffaloes, cows, horses, and their fodder. Undated.

To Dacca for a war elephant. Undated.

To Bhai Gurdas to bring the offerings. 17 Jan., 1692.

To Dacca Sangat. Offerings of cloth, weapons, shields to be given to Bhai Hulas Chand and to no one else, to bring for the Diwali Festival (Festival of Lights). Bhai Mihr Chand is not to worry, the guru will protect him. Undated.

To Bhai Ramdas Ugarsen. Thanks for sending a team of oxen to "Mata Ji" for the guru. Undated.

An invitation to friends to visit the guru. Undated.



To Dacca and neighbouring *sangats* for Rs. 900 by draft, also for red cloth and swords. May 22, 1691.

To Bhai Gurdas for the whole *sangat*. Dec. 25, 1692.

To Lucknow. Send one cannon and ammunition. Feb. 19, 1694.

To Bhai Taloka, Bhai Rama (Patiala). An urgent summons to come at once with a company of horsemen. Aug. 2, 1696.

To Rupa (South Punjab). Come quickly with a company of horsemen and footsoldiers with guns ; also one camel. Aug. 2, 1696.

To Shahzada Azimud Din, Cantonment *sangat*. 100 tolas of gold. July 14, 1698.

To Macchiwara *sangat*. One tola of gold, and any other offerings and tithes. Bring them yourselves. Do not trust the *masands*. March 12, 1699.

To Bhai Des Raj, Sangat Sahland Phapharian. Give offerings to Des Raj. April 25, 1699.

To Naushehra Pannuan, Dist. Amritsar. Come for Diwali with the offerings for the guru. Give to no one else. Send 1 tola of gold by draft. Contributors will be blessed. Oct. 5, 1699.

To Sangat Sarangdev. Bring the offerings for the guru yourself. Give them to no one else. Send two tolas of gold by draft. Come for Diwali. Oct. 5, 1699.

To Pathan Farid. The  $2\frac{1}{2}$  tolas of gold worth Rs. 19 $\frac{1}{4}$  sent by messenger Santokha has arrived. Thanks. Bring other offerings yourself. Trust no *masand*. Send 3 turbans and robes of honour. Feb. 1, 1700.

To Patan Shekh Farid. (This is translated below).

To Sangat Naushahra. Keep the offerings for the guru and give to no one. Bring them yourself or send by draft. Have nothing to do with *masands*, men or women. Come armed for Holi. Send 1 tola gold by draft. Nov. 4, 1700.

To Dasuha. Give offerings to no one without the guru's order. Whoever comes, let him bring them himself; or send by draft with the messenger. Send  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tolas of gold by draft on receiving this request. Two more warnings against *masands*. Nov. 4, 1700.

To Bhai Mihr Chand, Khufia Nawis. Send Rs. 25 right away by draft. Have nothing to do with any *masands*. Help other Sikhs, and come armed to meet the guru. Feb. 6, 1702.

To Mihr Chand, Dharm Chand. (Patna) Send by draft



Rs. 101 for an elephant. Give offerings for the guru to no *masand*, man or woman. Help any Sikh friends. Feb. 6, 1702.

To Sangat Pirag (Lucknow). Send 5 tolas of gold right away. Have nothing to do with *masands*. Have fellowship with all Sikhs. Injure none. Show love to one another. Come armed to meet the guru. Feb. 3, 1702.

To Bhai Bindraban Gulal Chand in Dacca. Send Rs. 101 by draft right away. Bring offerings for the guru yourself and come armed. Have nothing to do with any *masand*. Do not trust them. Have fellowship with any Sikh you meet.

Give the messenger Rs. 5. Feb. 3, 1702.

To Naushahra Sangat. Send 1 tola of gold right away by draft. Have nothing to do with the *masands*. Whoever comes armed to meet the guru will find happiness. Have fellowship with any Sikh you meet. Do not trouble them, but have love for one another. 6 Feb., 1702.

To Rupeana Sangat. Send 2 tolas of gold right away by draft. Have nothing to do with any *masand*. 1702

To Bhai Sukhia and Bhai Mukhia and Bhai Prasa and their *sangat*. Let stout young men come as horsemen and foot soldiers armed with guns. 1704

To Sangat Chola (Majha). Send 1 tola of gold worth Rs. 20 for the needs of Sikhs. Whoever comes armed will be blessed. The *sangat* is my dwelling place. March 4, 1706.

To Bhai Rupa and Bhairaran Sangat. Send 4 good oxen, for we are going South. Whichever sikhs are going with us, let them come at once. Oct. 21, 1706

To Sangat Dhaul. We have met the emperor with all success, and received a robe of honour and a jewelled necklace worth Rs. 60,000 as a gift. We are returning shortly. Be at peace with one another. When we come to Kahlur let all the Khalsa come armed. Send 2 tolas of gold worth Rs. 40 by draft. If the messenger dallies, throw him out of the congregation. Oct. 2, 1707.

To Khara Sangat, U. P. The meeting with the emperor was most successful. A robe of honour and a 60,000 rupee necklace was given me. We are coming in a few days. When we come to Kahlur come armed to meet me. Send by draft 1 tola of gold worth Rs. 20. Send a speedy messenger. Oct. 2, 1707.

To Sangat at Banares. Rs. 40 have been granted to Kirpa Singh, so give to him without delay. Feb. 3, 1708.







## CHAPTER VI

### Guru Gobind Singh and the Bhagavad Gita

Underlying the brilliant, many-sided personality of Guru Gobind Singh was a deep strain of mysticism. By mysticism we mean the direct, intuitional apprehension of the divine Being. This he had in common with the other Sikh gurus, and like them he was a practical mystic ; that is, he taught that it is not necessary for a mystic to abandon the world as a recluse, but that God could be experienced even better in the worldly affairs of men. He was truly a soldier-saint, pre-eminent in both these aspects. This mystic strain comes out clearly in the opening section of the Vachitar Natak, and in his references to the Bhagavad Gita. With regard to the guru's interest in the *Gita*, Dr. Mohan Singh has this to say :

Guru Gobind Singh...rendered the Lord's Song into beautiful, simple Punjabi verse, adding here and there his own elucidations, expositions, and commentary, altogether making of the translation the finest and surest interpretation of an admittedly difficult work, difficult to comprehend and expound as a unity in conception and execution, and as applicable to the case not only of an Indian military commander, but to all cases of doubt and hesitation in the conduct of all types of human affairs, civil or military, temporal or spiritual, individual or national...One feels bold enough to assert that in clarity, integration and disentanglement, the guru's commentary excels those by the three Acharyas, and naturally and rightly so, because the guru was a saint, even an Amsavatara, a poet, a warrior, all in one.<sup>1</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh, then translated the Bhagavad Gita from Sanskrit into the vernacular, and wrote a commentary on it which has been commended for its beauty of language and clear interpretations. It is therefore not strange that the Daswan Granth is saturated with ideas from the Gita. These

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to Punjabi Literature*, pp. 68, 69.



ideas are congenial, for both books were born of the necessities of war.<sup>1</sup>

Four passages in the Gita which are especially influential will be noted briefly. There is a striking similarity in the mission of Krishna and that of the guru. The Gita says :

Whenever there is decay of righteousness, O Bharata,  
And there is exaltation of unrighteousness,  
Then I Myself come forth :  
For the protection of the good,  
For the destruction of evil-doers,  
For the sake of firmly establishing righteousness  
I am born from age to age.<sup>2</sup> (4:7, 8.)

So, in the Vachitar Natak the guru describes his mission :

I shall now tell my own history.  
On the mountain of Hem Kunt  
I performed such penance  
That I became blended with God.  
When God gave me the order  
I assumed birth in this Kal age.  
I did not desire to come,  
As my attention was fixed on God's feet.  
God remonstrated earnestly with me,  
And sent me into this world with the following orders :  
"I have cherished thee as My son,  
And created thee to extend My religion.

Go and spread My religion there, and restrain the world from senseless acts."

I stood up, clasped my hands, bowed my head, and replied,

"Thy religion shall prevail in the world When Thou vouchsafest assistance."

On this account God sent me.  
Then I took birth and came into the world.  
As He spoke to me so I speak unto men ;  
I bear no enmity to anyone.  
All who call me the Supreme Being  
Shall fall into the pit of hell.  
Recognize me as God's servant only :

<sup>1</sup> Note: In *Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, article "Bhakti Marga" 2, ii, a, the theory is advanced that Brahmins in their struggle with Buddhism inserted many warlike verses into the *Gita* in order to win over the Kshatriyas to fight for their cause. Similarly see article "*Bhagavad Gita*," pp. 535-536.

<sup>2</sup> Besant, Annie, Das, Bhagwan, *The Bhagavad Gita*, pp. 126, 127.



Have no doubt whatever of this.  
 I am the slave of the Supreme Being,  
 And have come to behold the wonders of the world.  
 I will tell the world what God told me,  
 And will not remain silent through fear of mortals.  
 I assumed birth for the purpose  
 Of spreading the faith, saving the saints, and extirpating  
 all tyrants.<sup>1</sup> (6:1-5 ; 29.32 ; 43.)

The Gita thus expounds the reward of the warrior :

Slain, thou wilt obtain heaven ;  
 Victorious, thou will enjoy the earth ;  
 Therefore stand up O son of Kunti,  
 Resolute to fight.<sup>2</sup> (2:37).

Death in battle, then, offers another pathway to heaven for the brave. The guru adds a vivid feminine touch to the dreadful battle descriptions of the Dasam Granth by introducing the heavenly fairies of ancient Hindu lore (*Hur*) who frequent the battlefields to welcome to their embraces those who fall in the fight. These *Hurīs* were very popular in Islam also. In the Dasam Granth these celestial maidens are active thus :

Thousands of *hūr* in heaven  
 Choose in marriage those who fall in the van. (Vach. Nat.  
 3:12)  
 As the mighty heroes roar the *Hurīs* swirl about the battle-  
 field,  
 And superbly robed ones move about and fill the heaven.  
 "Respected Sirs, are you well ? May you live forever !  
 We sacrifice ourselves for you," thus they speak.  
 "I take hold of thy garment, O Raja,  
 Marry me ! Abandoning such a brave man as thou,  
 To whom then could I propose ?  
 Come and wed me. I wish only to serve thee.  
 Leave Lanka soon, and come to the abode of the gods !" (*Ram Avtār* 591-607).

Here then was a strong reinforcement of the will to fight, for death in battle for a righteous cause offered a sure pathway to heaven in addition to the *Nām Japnā* of the sants and the *zīkr* of the Sufis.

As might be expected, the vision of God in warlike aspect, the destroyer, which forms the climax of the Gita, is reflected

<sup>1</sup> Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, V., 296-301.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit* The Gita, p. 88.



in the Granth, especially the blazing light, the many weapons, and the sharp, grinding teeth which grind multitudes to destruction. Thus the Gita :

If the splendour of a thousand suns  
 Were to blaze out together in the sky,  
 That might resemble the glory of that Mahatman. (11:12)  
 Shining, a mass of splendour everywhere,  
 With discus, mace, tiara, I behold :  
 Blazing as fire, as sun, dazzling the gaze  
 From all sides in the sky, immeasurable. (17)  
 Nor source, nor midst, nor end ; infinite force,  
 Unnumbered arms, the sun and moon Thine eyes !  
 I see Thy face, as sacrificial fire.  
 Blazing, its splendour burneth up the worlds. (19)  
 Like Time's destroying flames I see Thy teeth,  
 Upstanding, spread within expanded jaws ;  
 Naught know I anywhere, no shelter find,  
 Mercy, O God ! refuge of all the worlds !  
 The sons of Dhrtā-Rāstrā, and with them  
 The multitude of all these kings of earth,  
 Bhīsmā, and Drōṇā, Sūtā's mighty sons,  
 And all the noblest warriors of our hosts,  
 Into Thy gaping mouths they hurrying rush.  
 Tremendous-toothed and terrible to see ;  
 Some caught within the gaps between  
 Thy teeth  
 Are seen, their heads to powder crushed and ground.  
 As river floods impetuously rush,  
 Hurling their waters into ocean's lap,  
 So fling themselves into Thy flaming mouths,  
 In haste, these mighty men, these lords of earth.  
 As moths with quickened speed will headlong fly  
 Into a flaming light, to fall destroyed.  
 So also these, in haste precipitate,  
 Enter within Thy mouths destroyed to fall.  
 On every side, all-swallowing, fiery-tongued.  
 Thou lickest up mankind, devouring all ;  
 Thy glory filleth space : the universe is  
 Burning, Viṣṇu, with Thy blazing rays. (25-30)

Addressing the immortal as typified by the sword, the tenth guru says :

### Praise of the Sword

The Sword cuts sharply, destroys the host of the wicked,  
 And has power to adorn the battlefield.



It is an unbreakable shaft in the hand,  
 It is very sharp, and its flash pales the radiance of the sun.  
 The Sword brings peace to the saints.  
 Fear to the evil-minded, destruction to sin,  
 So it is my refuge.  
 Hail ! Hail to the Creator of the world,  
 The Saviour of Creation, my Preserver in every way,  
 Hail, O Sword !  
 Everlasting Light, Uncreated Form,  
 God of great Gods, King of great Kings,  
 Without body, everlasting,  
 Without form or disposition,  
 All Powerful—Hail Wearer of the Sword !

(Vach. Nat. 1:1-3)

Shining with great brilliance,  
 Enthroned afar,  
 The Peerless One, in splendour,  
 Who ground up the incarnate Maha Dar.  
 And devoured thousands of the world creatures (18)  
 Hail, Sharp-toothed One, with mighty and powerful  
 teeth ! (89)

Besides the immortal in his warlike aspect, references to the God of grace appear all through both the Gita and the Granth,<sup>1</sup> echoing the promise :

Flee unto Him for shelter with all thy being, O Bharata,  
 By His grace thou shalt obtain supreme peace,  
 The everlasting dwelling-place (Gita 18:62)  
 Merge thy mind in Me, be My devotee,  
 Sacrifice to Me, prostrate thyself before Me.  
 I pledge My troth ; thou art dear to Me.  
 Abandoning all duties, come to Me alone for shelter,  
 Sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins. (Gitā  
 18:65, 66)

The guru selected material to suit his main purpose, that of steeling his people for defensive war. He rejected the teaching of The Gita on caste duty, incarnation, action without desire (which the Gita teaches along with such inducements to fight as were noted in the quotation from Gita (2:37), *nirvāna* (the hur, *āhimsa* (what little there is of it in the Gita), and the value of *yogā* and asceticism. To suit his purpose he found in the Gitā frequent commands to fight a defensive war, and a powerful vision of the immortal in his warlike form ; but along with

<sup>1</sup> Such as *Swaya I*, Macauliffe, p. 280; IV, p. 281; X, p. 283; p. 307, p. 307-8 etc.



this militaristic teaching he found emphasis also on a mission of deliverance and mercy, and on a God who is supremely gracious. Guru Gobind Singh, soldier-saint supreme, must have remembered the advice to Arjun in the Gita :

Further, looking to thine own duty  
Thou shouldst not tremble ;  
For there is nothing more welcome to a Kshatriya than a  
righteous war.  
Happy the Kshatriyas, O Partha,  
Who obtain such a fight,  
Offered unsought as an open door to heaven. (Gita 2:  
31, 32)

The guru's final prayer likewise was :

O Lord, grant me this boon,  
That I may never shirk a chance to do the right,  
I may never fear my enemy when I come out to fight for  
the truth,  
And I may always believe that I would win.  
May I be guided by my conscience,  
And may I ever be hungry for chanting Thy praises.  
O Lord, grant me the boon that when my end draws  
near  
I may fall fighting for the truth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Kulraj, *Life Story and Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 25.



## CHAPTER VII

### The Guru and Islam

A liberal Muslim historian of note, in spite of his admiration of Guru Gobind Singh as an administrator, warrior, and poet, states that after the cruel death of his father at the hands of the Emperor Aurangzeb the guru "longed to wreak vengeance on the murderers of his father and the persecutors of his race, and became the inveterate and irreconcilable enemy of every Mahomedan."<sup>1</sup> This extreme opinion is probably widespread, especially in the West. A closer look at the guru's relationships with Islam and its followers seems to be called for.

Sunni Islam, by its positiveness, not to say fanaticism, of belief and its aggressiveness in practice has exerted tremendous pressure wherever it has established itself, especially as a Muslim State. In its extremely orthodox form Islam, during the reign of some of the Mughal emperors, demanded an all-or-none reaction ; either believe and recite the Creed, or die as a rebellious unbeliever (*kâfir*). Islam had been established in northern India before Guru Gobind Singh came on the scene ; so it is not surprising that a man as sensitive to spiritual truth as the guru should find congenial beliefs in Islam, both Sûfi and Sunni, yet as a free man should oppose to the death any attempt to force conformity to them.

Attention has been called to the Muslim terms for God found among the thousand names of the Jâp.<sup>2</sup> The use of these sonorous and dignified names may well have been, among other things, an early attempt to break down communalism, and to return to the reconciling efforts of Guru Nanak, an attempt that alas ! was frustrated by the bigotry that became all too prevalent among the later Mughal emperors.

The guru's semitic outlook on the subject of incarnation has been noted, and he would have endorsed the quranic

<sup>1</sup> Latif, S. M., *History of the Punjab*, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> See page 20 above.



verse, *Lam yalid wa lam yūlad*,—"He does not beget and He is not begotten," (Sura 112 of the Quran). Then, too, the Huris, those celestial maidens who hover over the battlefields to welcome to their embraces those who fall in the fight were popular in Islam as well as in ancient Hindu lore. They were congenial to the guru's purpose as well, and served to add a vivid feminine touch to the dreadful sights on the gory battlefield.

It is a well known fact that the guru had a band of 500 Pathan mercenaries in his army. Khushwant Singh gives as the reason for this that "he made sure that his crusade would not be wrongly construed as one of Sikhs against Muslims : the nucleus of his private army consisted of five hundred Pathan mercenaries.<sup>1</sup> Their desertion just before the Battle of Bhangani does not contradict this statement, for they were mercenaries first and Muslims second, and were all out after plunder,—and they deserted to the Hindu forces. His contingent of Sikh *udasis* also deserted in the face of what seemed to be superior forces of the enemy. Prof. Kartar Singh likewise says of these Muslim soldiers :

Their presence in the Guru's army gives a lie direct to the assertions of persons like Latif who would have us believe that the Guru was an "irreconcilable and inveterate enemy of every Mohammedan." He had no ill will against any individual. It was the evil system that he wanted to destroy, and it was against its defenders that his efforts were directed.<sup>2</sup>

Muslim friends helped the guru to escape after the siege of Chamkaur in the guise of "Uchch ka Pir." If they had not come to the rescue it is hard to see how the guru could have eluded the swarms of troops out looking for him.

### Malerkotla and Sarhind

These two Muslim cities show us both sides of the guru's dealing with Muslims. After the retreat from Anandpur, the guru's two younger sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, with their grand-mother Gujari, were betrayed by an old Hindu servant and captured by the Wazir of Sarhind. The two boys, aged seven and nine, refused to recant and accept Islam, so were cruelly put to death with the consent of Wazir Khan.

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Khushwant, op. cit. p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Singh, Kartar, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 169.



One tradition has it that they were bricked up alive in a wall ; another that they were beheaded. At any rate, the Nawab of Malerkotla earned the lasting gratitude of the Sikhs by protesting against putting the children to death. A modern Sikh historian puts it thus :

The Sikhs have always remembered this protest of the Nawab with gratitude, and throughout their troubled relations with the Muslim powers they have always spared the house of Malerkotla from their attacks.<sup>1</sup>

Macauliffe relates the guru's reaction to the news of his sons' death as follows :

While the Guru was listening to the narrative, he was digging up a shrub with his knife. He said, "As I dig up this shrub by the roots, so shall the Turks be extirpated." He inquired if anyone except the Nawab of Malerkotla had spoken on behalf of the children. The messenger replied in the negative. The Guru then said that after the roots of the oppressive Turks were all dug up, the roots of the Nawab should still remain. His Sikhs should one day come and lay Sarhind waste.<sup>2</sup>

Sarhind and Malerkotla exemplify the fulfilment of this prophecy. Banda Singh had been given a special commission by the guru just before his death to behead Wazir Khan, the governor of Sarhind who had been responsible for the murder. It so happened that Wazir Khan was beheaded in the battle at Sarhind, and the town itself was thoroughly sacked and many of its inhabitants slaughtered by Banda's followers. On the other hand, the Sikhs have never molested Malerkotla even when the whole surrounding country was devastated. This was true during Banda Singh's expedition into the Punjab, when the guru's words were fresh in the memory. It is still more amazing that the city with its predominantly Muslim population was not molested in the terrible communal rioting attending the Partition of India in 1947. Even though the city lies in the heart of the Malwa country near the Sikh States of Nabha and Patiala, the Sikhs remembered the guru's words and obeyed them. Malerkotla remains today the only Muslim city in the East Punjab.

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Teja, Singh, Ganda, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 73 n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Macauliffe, V, p. 199.



Even the guru's dealings with the fanatical old Emperor Aurangzeb show a singular lack of vindicativeness. We are told in the Mahan Kosh that in addition to the stern denunciation in the Zafarnama, the guru wrote the aging emperor another letter of "loving advice" which moved the old man so that he invited the guru to come to see him, and ordered his officials in the North to cease molesting the guru. Even if this is mere tradition, it does show forth the guru's reputation for reconciliation.

### The Guru and Emperor Bahadur Shah

The guru's relations with Prince Muazzam had been fairly good during the days of rivalry with the hill chiefs. It seems that Muazzam sought the guru's help in the contest for the throne of his father, and in the contest for the succession to the imperial throne the guru aided his old friend Muazzam against his younger brother Azam. "This drew him closer to the new Emperor, who invited him to Agra and presented him with a rich dress of honour and a jewelled scarf worth 60 thousand rupees. The Guru was pleased with the interview, and saw in it the possibility of ending the age-old differences with the Mughals."<sup>1</sup> The guru accompanied the new emperor into the Deccan. Much controversy has taken place as to the guru's motives in doing so. From what we know of the guru's independent nature and his high ideals, it seems impossible that he went as a mercenary soldier against the brave Mahrattas. The *Tārīkh-i-Bahādurshāhī*, as quoted by Dr. Ganda Singh, makes his motive travel and propaganda : "Guru Gobind Singh, one of the descendents of Nanak, had come into these districts *to travel* and accompanied the royal camp. He was in the habit of constantly addressing assemblies of worldly persons, religious fanatics and all sorts of people."<sup>2</sup> The guru's role as a conciliator must not be forgotten, and it is quite likely that he tried to persuade Bahadur Shah to walk the ways of peace. However this may be, the guru eventually left the emperor and settled at Nander in Hyderabad, Deccan. In his last *Hukam Namas* he writes of the satisfactory talks he had with the emperor and of his intention of returning soon to Anandpur.

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Teja, Singh, Ganda, *op. cit.* p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p.77 n.

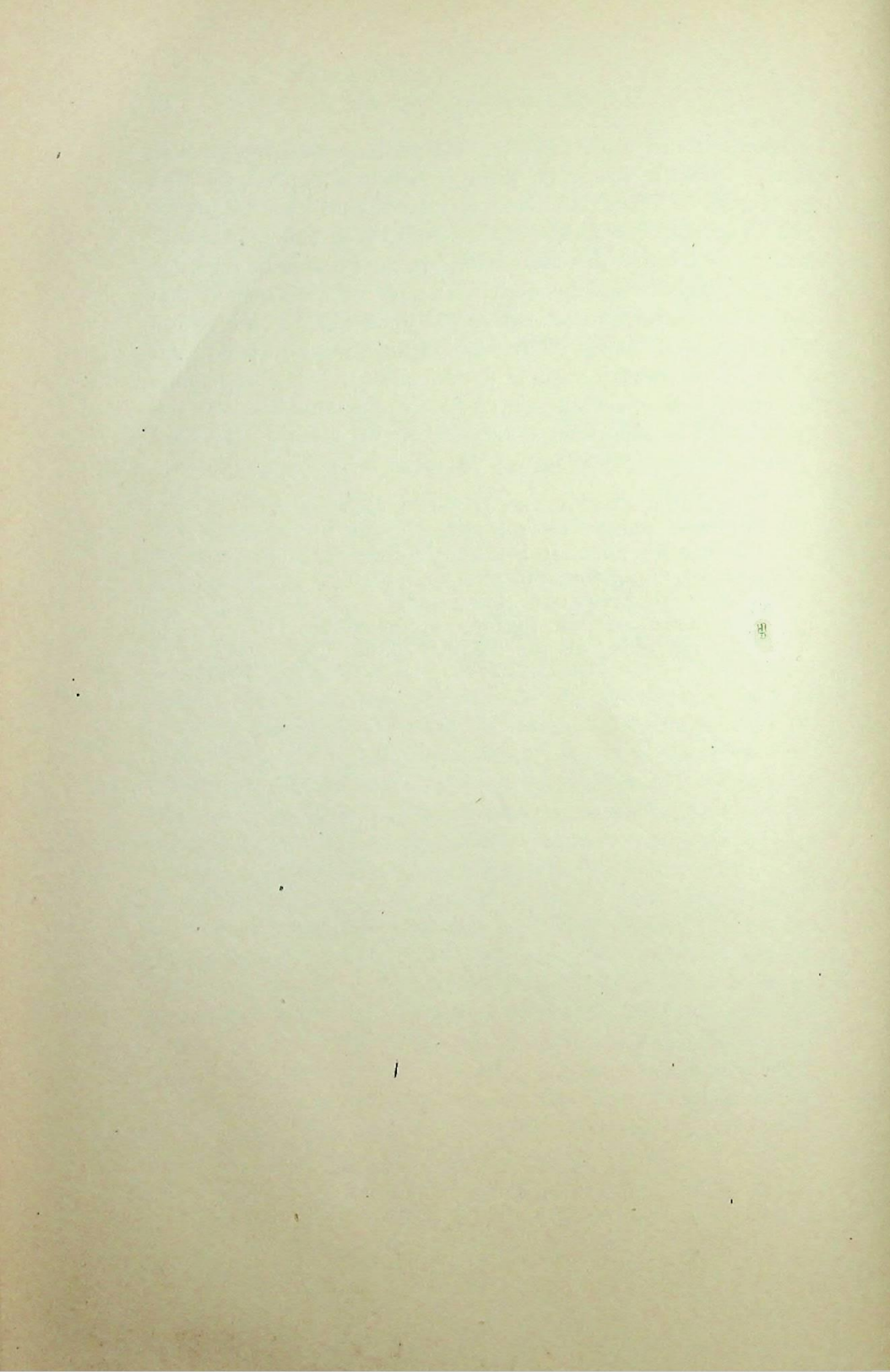


Some of the guru's Muslim friends have been mentioned, such as those in his army, those who helped him escape after the battle of Chamkaur and even Aurangzeb's son, Emperor Shah Bahadur. He fought against Aurangzeb and his minions not simply because they were Muslims, but because he regarded them as fanatics and hypocrites. It must be remembered that two of his major battles were forced upon him by the Hindu hill rajas. Even though Guru Gobind Singh had to spend most of his life in warfare against the Mughals, a strain of longing for peace and fellowship with both Hindus and Muslims can be detected in such lines as the well known verses in the Akal Ustat : These seem to express his hope for a better future :

The temple and the mosque are the same,  
Puja and namaz are the same,  
All men are one, it is through error  
That they appear different...  
Allah and Abhek are the same,  
The Puran and the Quran are the same,  
They are alike, all the creation of the One.

(vs. 16:86)







## CHAPTER VIII

### Translations

#### 1. The Battle Between the Lavites and the Kushites

The descendents of the brothers Lav and Kush fought each other for the possession of Lahore, which had been seized from the Lavites by the Kushites. Battle scenes of this sort occur by the score in the Granth of the tenth guru. The following scene is evidently written by someone with first-hand experience of similar warfare. This is a fairly literal translation of the third chapter of Guru Gobind Singh's biographical Vachitar Natak. The entire 50 verses, running to three pages, are given to show something of the mass effect of such description. This would be much enhanced if it were read aloud in the vernacular :

The Creator caused many kinds of quarrels and hatreds,  
Which no reformer could efface.

The great Raja Lust and his doughty warriors Greed  
and Infatuation—

What hero has gone unscathed from their blows ?  
There the resplendent warriors give each other abuse (*gali*),  
Then archers, mail-clad warriors, peerless swordsmen  
Rise and join in furious battle,  
While the minions of Shiv and Baital dance and his drum  
beats.

Sometimes Shivji strings heads on his necklace,  
Turn by turn ghosts wail and spectres shriek ;  
Chamunda (Kali) shouts, vultures croak,  
Here and there the corpses of splendid heroes lie in tangled  
heaps.

The slaughter is great, and the wounded roll about  
With both hands clutching their wounds.  
Here lie skulls, helmets, bows and arrows,  
There on the battlefield, the swords and quivers of the  
Kshatriyas.

Vultures croak, foul spirits belch,  
There Kali and other dreadful spectres shriek and roar,



Here heroes and ghosts stagger about,  
There carrion-eating demon spirits laugh.

Mighty warriors roar,  
And put thunderclouds to shame.  
They plant their standards firmly,  
And with mounting rage they fight on.  
With swords and daggers  
They fight with fury.  
The mighty, resplendent warriors  
As they fight set the earth to trembling.  
The warriors ply their weapons,  
Sparks fly from those hurled ;  
With swords and daggers,  
Steel takes heavy toll.

Two-edged swords of Halba, Jannab, and Sirohi,  
Knives, swords and daggers they furiously ply.  
Here with spears, there with javelins,  
There with lances and pikes—utter confusion reigns.

The heroes are adorned with rage,  
Forgetting doubt they fight on.  
Fearlessly they wield their weapons,  
And cut off the arms and legs of their opponents.

They care for nothing,  
But only shout "Kill, kill !"  
Bellowing, they shove about mightily,  
Even while receiving blows from many weapons.  
Thousands of Huris in heaven  
Choose in marriage those (who fall) in the van ; (vs. 11)  
But they sway about with terrifying mein  
And only shout "Kill, kill !"  
One has a limb cut off,  
Another, his long hair pulled out by the roots,  
Another has his flesh in shreds,  
While another falls hacked to pieces.  
Drums beat, shields clash,  
Forward ranks fall back,  
Missiles fly thickly from the warriors,  
While hosts are trampled underfoot.  
New war drums sound,  
And the warriors, unflinching, roar,  
While they ply sword and bow,  
And deftly cut off limbs.  
Full of anger, they advance,  
And do not retreat even four feet.  
Grasping their weapons, they roar battle cries  
That put thunderclouds to shame.



Uttering these terrifying shouts,  
They brandish their swishing swords  
And fight, forgetting all anxiety,  
While many go straight to heaven.  
The enraged warriors advance  
With showers of arrows.  
Conch shells send forth their roar,  
But the heroes, steadfast, cover themselves with glory.

Bugles and conches blow,  
The mighty warriors exult,  
Swift horses prance,  
Mad warrior-saints rush about.  
Sharp swords flash  
Like lightning,  
The beat of drums increases  
To a continuous roar.  
Broken swords and helmets lie about,  
As, shouting "Kill !"  
They wrestle and shove,  
And fall in confusion.  
A great host is trampled underfoot,  
Half their limbs are cut off,  
As they wield maces  
And cry "Kill, kill !"  
Rivers of blood flow,  
The Huris in heaven rush about ;  
Kali roars in heaven  
While her minions hold skulls and laugh.  
The mighty heroes exult,  
Clad in steel and anger,  
As they thunder out their insolence,  
Putting the storm clouds to shame.

They have steel for their ornaments,  
And keep shouting "Kill, kill !"  
On their faces are curved mustaches,  
As, abandoning all care, they fight on.  
Shouting battle cries,  
The armies try to surround each other,  
They pull and push on all sides,  
And shout "Kill !" continuously.  
The heroes are so cumbered with spears,  
That it seems as if the Ganges were entering the ocean.  
On shields raised for protection  
Swords clash.

As battle cries resound,  
Eager horses prance.



Imbued with battle lust,  
 Rage mounts as men fight.  
 Sharp spears fall  
 As the melee continues ;  
 Carrion-eaters dance,  
 But the warriors are engrossed in the battle.  
 Flesh-eaters laugh,  
 Bands of evil spirits dance,  
 But the stubborn fighters press on,  
 Shrieking only "Kill !"

In heaven the goddess chatters,  
 Offspring of Maha Kāl ;  
 The spirits dance violently,  
 Steeped in battle lust.  
 Filled with hatred, fighting on,  
 Mighty warriors become martyrs ;  
 But others plant their standards firmly,  
 And shout with mounting hatred ;  
 With ornamental bands bound on their turbans,  
 They fit arrows on their bow strings,  
 and shoot back and forth,  
 So that many fall, cut in two.  
 Elephants and horses lie dead,  
 But the stalwarts are filled with hatred,  
 And as they fearlessly wield their weapons,  
 Both sides strive for victory.  
 Warrior-saints, coming up, shout,  
 Swift horses prance,  
 Battle cries resound  
 As the armies mill about.  
 Mad with drink,  
 Inflamed with rage,  
 Bands of elephants exult,  
 And fight with mounting fury.  
 Sharp swords flash  
 Like streaks of lightning in the clouds,  
 As they fall on the enemy  
 Like swarms of swift water-bugs.  
 Back and forth they ply their weapons,  
 Both sides strive for victory,  
 Steeped in anger, drunken with rage.  
 Warrior fights warrior with unparalleled ferocity,  
 War drums beat with a throbbing noise.  
 New battle drums thunder with a deep roar,  
 Men stagger about with bodies, trunks, and heads pierced  
 with arrows.

On the battlefield some ply swords, some watch out for arrows,  
 Mighty warriors, wounded in the battle, writhe ;



Haughty heroes, binding on quivers,  
And full equipment, rush about like drunken men.  
In the battle, the clash of steel on steel is heard on all  
sides,

As if the clouds of the day of doom were thundering ;  
At the crack of bowstrings even the stout-hearted quail,  
But steel clashes in anger as the great battle goes on.  
Youthful warriors charge about in the great battle,  
Kshatriyas strike terror with their naked swords,  
The stalwarts, steeped in rage, are engrossed in battle,  
Hot with rage, they seize their opponents with their  
hands.

Sharp swords flash as they wield them in anger,  
Trunks and heads roll about, and sparks fly from weapons.

Heroes shout, blood gurgles from wounds,

It is as if Indra and Britarayam were locked in battle.  
The bloody battle continues, the mighty heroes roar,  
Weapons ply back and forth, weapons clash with weapons,  
Sparks fly from spears, the infuriated warriors are covered  
with blood,

As if respectable men were celebrating Holi.

As many as stay fighting the enemy

Are killed at last ;

As many as flee from the battlefield

Are shamed at last.

Suits of mail are broken,

Leather shields slip from the hand ;

Here and there on the battlefields lie helmets,

And heaps of fallen heroes.

Here, mustached faces,

There, idle weapons ;

Here, scabbards and swords,

There, huge turbans.

Twirling their mustaches,

Haughty ones join the fray ;

Shields resound with blows,

Sometimes men break and run.

Mighty warriors are on the battlefield with naked, bloody  
swords,

Spectres and spirits, ghosts and demons dance about ;

War drums thunder, the roar of conch shells rises,

As when wrestlers are locked together with hands on each  
other's sides.

Among the many heroes who won glory by fighting valiantly  
in the van,

Death did not spare a single one alive.



All the Kshatriyas who gathered in the arena of the  
 battlefield with sword and dagger,  
 Those who endured fiery steel in battle were released  
 from bondage without funeral pyres ;  
 Even though cut to pieces and martyred, they did not  
 retreat a foot ;  
 With unprecedented shouts of Victory, they went straight  
 to Indra's heaven.

\* \* \* \* \*

From such battle scenes as this, certain ideas emerge to help the process of hardening the soul for war : (1) Death in battle assures immediate entrance into heaven ; (2) even if half his limbs are cut off, the true warrior never retreats, but (3) he remains calm and steadfast in the tumult of battle ; (4) flight from the battlefield brings shame and loss both in this life and the next, so it is better to face its terrors ; (5) the warrior hero is imbued with battle lust, rages, shouts, sometimes drinks strong liquor, disdains suffering and death, and has only the obsession to "Kill, kill !" so as to obtain the victory at all costs ; (6) in the end, evil is defeated and the righteous cause wins.

## 2. Stealing the Emperor's Horses

### A Girl's Daring

Among the 404 stories of women, there are some 75 illustrating the bravery and cleverness of women. This story is well known, and appears in Persian Gurmukhi as Hikayat Eleven.

The first part of the poem describes a charming prince of the East. A money-lender's daughter, Swaran Manjari, wishes to marry him. The prince says that if she will bring him the two famous horses of the Emperor Sher Shah, named Raha and Suraha, he would make her his wife. Off she goes, and by a clever stratagem steals Raha from the closely-guarded palace in Delhi. The emperor is so intrigued by this bold robbery that he offers a reward and forgiveness if the thief will confess. Then

The girl, putting on men's clothing and adorning herself  
 with beautiful ornaments,

Said to Sher Shah, "I stole your horse."

When the king saw her

He was pleased, and his anger melted.

Seeing her beauty, he praised her highly,

And gave her twenty thousand gold pieces as a reward.



Laughing he said, "Listen, fair thief,  
 Tell me plainly the way you stole my steed."  
 So the girl, on receiving such an order,  
 After putting the reward away safely, returned with some  
 spikes.

She tied bundles of grass to form a raft on the river,  
 And thus deceiving the Emperor's guards,  
 She entered the stream and floated across,  
 Then pressed hard against the palace wall beneath the  
 Emperor's window.

While the bell-ringer rang out the hours  
 She pounded in the spikes unheard.  
 The day passed and dark night came ;  
 Then the girl went to the same place,  
 And in the same way loosed the steed, and astride him  
 Leaped through the window.

Then, dashing into the water, she swam him across to  
 the other side.

She showed all the people this amazing feat,  
 And made fun of Sher Shah with these words,

"In this way," she said, "the first steed came into my  
 hands,

The second horse I stole by craft right under your eyes."  
 Sher Shah then said, "What has happened to my mind ?  
 Where Raha went, there Suraha goes too !"

All the people, with Sher Shah, saw this crafty deed,  
 And gnashing their teeth, said,

"What could have happened to our minds ?

This thief stole Raha, but we ourselves gave Suraha away !"  
 (Charitar 246:16-25)

### 3. The Hurs

These heavenly fairies, the hurs, perhaps more familiarly  
 known by their Mohammadan name of huris, appear in the  
 Vachitar Natak (3:12) so would seem to have the approval of  
 Guru Gobind Singh himself. They are described at great  
 length in the Ram Autar :

The Huris swirl about the battlefield like clouds gathering  
 in the sky ;

As they look upon the heroes, their heart is captured by them.  
 With her body clad in scarlet garments her beauty is  
 unexcelled,

Her body is a treasury of unique loveliness.

Her beautifully colored garments glorify her limbs,  
 On seeing her form, the god of love is shamed.



Her glance outdoes the arrow, and burns up evil thoughts.  
She is described in superlatives, and is a well of wisdom.

Her face is a lotus flower, her deer-like eyes an arrow ;  
The form of her speech is sweet like the cuckoo's ;  
Her tiger-waist is graceful, she has an elephant's gait,  
The glance of her eyes steals away the heart.

She has beautiful deer-like eyes, her voice is pitched like  
the cuckoo's,

She steals away the senses as she walks with an elephant's  
gait.

She speaks sweetly, and has a moon-like face ;

She is the abode of high thoughts, the destroyer of evil  
minds,

In beauty the impersonation of love itself.

Her upper garment is of golden hue, and with the art  
of the dancer

The colourful one steps with tinkling feet.

Nose ring, finger rings, bracelets many—

Her hair is coiled in wreaths.

Her chin enhances her beauty,

Here and there she wears necklaces of pearls,

On her hands shine rings and bracelets ;

Beholding her beauty, the god of love swoons.

Her coiled hair intensifies her beauty, her tongue kindles  
the fire of love.

Her hands are decorated with rings and bracelets of beautiful  
design,

And around her neck are strings of pearls.

Her lovely eyes shine with various coloured eye-salves.

They are sharp, but deer-like ;

Like the lotus, like the moon she gleams.

(Ram Autar vs. 591-595)

These huri beauties make friendly offers of marriage to the  
fighting heroes :

As the mighty heroes roar, the Huris swirl about the battle-  
field,

And superbly robed ones move about and fill heaven.

"Respected Sirs, are you well ? May you live forever

We sacrifice ourselves for you." Thus they speak—

"I take hold of thy garment, O Raja, marry me !

Abandoning such a brave man as thou,

To whom then could I propose ?

Come and wed me ! I wish only to serve thee.

Leave Lanka soon, and come to the abode of the gods !"

(Ram Autar vs. 607)



Mention should be made of the special kind of verse found in this part of the Dasam Granth. The first word is meaningless usually, and is inserted mainly for sound effect :

triṇaṇaṇ tīram/ briṇaṇiṇ bīram//  
arrows warriors  
dḥraṇaṇaṇ dhālam/ jrananaṇ jwālam//  
shields fire

(Ram Autar vs. 538)

Another variant is this :

rāgardī ros ripu rāj/in anger Rawan  
lāgardī lachhman pac dhāyo/ toward Lachhman ran  
kāgardī krodh tan kuryo/ with rage his body burned  
pāgardī hūae pavan sīdhāyo// being wind he ran  
(vs. 562)

There are thirty-one such lines here, and others are found in vs. 390-397 and 483-490. There are also fifty-two lines with the variant *jādgardang*, *rāgdang*. Some such verse as this is also found in *Chandi Charitar*. Love for such rhymes and jingles is characteristic of modern Punjabi too.

#### 4. The Goddess Durga

Durga, or Chandi, seems to have been the patron saint of the Singhs. She appears frequently in the Dasam Granth, in which three books are devoted to her. She was lovely to her friends, but terrible to her foes. Here are two descriptions of her, one from the Akal Ustat, the other from the First Chandi Charitar :

Thine eyes are sharp as lightning's arrows,  
Thy snake-like curls fly like galloping steeds,  
Thy hand grasps a battle-axe,  
Thou dost rescue from hell  
And save sinners by thy long arm.  
Thy radiance is like lightning,  
Thy waist like the tiger's,  
From beginning to end of time thou art terrible.

Thine eyes are like the lotus,  
They destroy sadness and save from anxiety ;  
As thou bindest on thy armour.  
Thy laughter is like lightning,  
Thy nostrils like the parrot's,



Thy bearing lofty, thy garments beautiful,  
 Thou devourer of the foe !  
 Bold, lovely in body, giver of wisdom,  
 Swift in gait, slayer of demons,  
 Victory to thee, O crusher of Mahakhasur !  
 Thou art forever in our hearts.  
 Bells adorn thee, making a harmonious jingle,  
 On hearing their melody doubt and fear fly away.  
 The cuckoo hearing it is put to shame ;  
 Sin flees far away and peace springs up in the heart.  
 The host of the wicked are burned up,  
 Mind and body rejoice.  
 In battle thou standest fast,  
 And fleest not from fear.

Thy radiance is like lightning,  
 Thy nostrils are finely molded,  
 Thy face is radiant, thy strength matchless,  
 Thou annihilator of demons, rainer of arrows,  
 Scaring evil doers into the depths of hell !  
 Wielder of the eight weapons, Keeper of thy word,  
 Refuge of the saints, mysterious in thy ways.  
 Victory to thee, crusher of Mahakhasur !  
 From eternity thy nature is unfathomable.  
 (Akal Ustat, vs. 221-224)

Chandi is thus described to Sumbh, King of the Demons  
 who, as a result, sends her a proposal of marriage :

Her face is like the moon, and banishes pain,  
 Her curls steal away the beauty of the snake.  
 Her eyes are like lotus flowers,  
 Her eyebrows like bows, her glance like arrows.  
 Her waist is tiger-like, her gait elephant-like,  
 She outshines the goddess of love herself.  
 Sword in hand, she rides upon a tiger,  
 In appearance like the sun, Hari's consort.  
 Fish, lotus, swallow, all are put to shame,  
 The wasps fly madly about the jungle ;  
 Parrot, dove, peacock, cuckoo  
 At the sound of her voice wander aimlessly in the jungle,  
 But find no rest for their souls.

On seeing the rows of her teeth  
 The pomegranate's heart breaks ;  
 And the radiance of her form  
 Fills the world with silvery light.  
 She is such an ocean of beauty  
 That with a glance of her eye  
 She straightway stole my heart.

(Chandi Charitar I vs. 88, 89)



In the first verse above there is a play on the word "hari" (vs. 88) which means in turn : moon, wreath, bow, arrow, elephant, sword, tiger, and sun, and the god Hari :

hari so mukh hai hariti dukh hai/  
 alikai harihār prabhā harni hai/  
 lochan hai hari se sarse hari se bharute hari si baruni hai/  
 kohari sav kariha chalbo hari pai hari ki harini tarni hai/  
 hai kar mai hari pai hari so hari rūp kie hari kī dharni hai/

## 5. The Story of Joseph and Zulaikha

The original account of Joseph and his brothers comes from the time of Moses, C. 1500 B.C., and is found in the Bible, the Book of Genesis, chapters 37-50. The story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, who is not named in the biblical account, is found in Genesis chapter 39. Joseph's nine brothers were jealous of him, since he was his father's favourite, being the son of his old age; and besides, Joseph seems to have been guilty of some youthful boasting. However that may be, the brothers seized Joseph when he went to see them in the wilderness of Dothan and threw him into an empty well. Later they sold him to a caravan of Midianites who took him to Egypt and sold him as a slave to Potiphar, captain of the guard of the Ruler of Egypt. The Bible account is:

Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there... Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking. And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph and said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Lo, having me my master has no concern about anything in the house and he has put everything that he has in my hand; he is not greater in this house than I am; nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" And although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie with her or to be with her. But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and got him out of the house. And when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and had fled out of the house, she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to insult us; he came in to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice;



and when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled and got out of the house." Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to insult me; but as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled out of the house."

When his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison.

(The Bible, Genesis 39).  
(Revised Standard Version)

The account in the Quran agrees in the main with that of the Bible up to where Joseph is thrown into a well because of the jealousy of his brothers. Then we read:

And wayfarers came and sent their drawer of water and he let down his bucket. "Good news!" said he, "This is a youth!" ... And they sold him for a paltry price—for some dirhems counted down, and at no high rate did they value him.

And he who bought him—an Egyptian—said to his wife, "Treat him hospitably; haply he may be useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son." ... And she in whose house he was conceived a passion for him, and she shut the door and said, "Come hither." He said, "God keep me! Verily my lord hath given me a good home; and the injurious shall not prosper."

But she longed for him; and he had longed for her had he not seen a token from his lord.<sup>1</sup> Thus we averted evil and defilement from him, for he was one of our sincere servants.

And they both made for the door, and she rent his shirt behind; and at the door they met her lord. "What," said she, "shall be the recompense of him who would do evil to thy family, but a prison or a sore punishment?" He said, "She solicited me to evil." And a witness out of her own family witnessed: "If his shirt be rent in front she speaketh truth, and he is a liar: but if his shirt be rent behind, she lieth and he is true." And when his lord saw his shirt torn behind, he said, "This is one of your devices! verily your devices are great! Joseph! Leave this affair. And thou, O wife, ask pardon for thy crime, for thou hast sinned." And in the city, the women said, "The wife of the Prince hath solicited her servant: he hath fired her with his love: but we clearly see her manifest error."

<sup>1</sup> The apparition of his father who said, "Hereafter shall the names of thy brethren, engraven on precious stones, shine on the breast of the High Priest. Shall thine be blotted out?"



And when she heard of their cabal, she sent to them and got ready a banquet for them, and gave each one of them a knife, and said, "Joseph, shew thyself to them." And when they saw him they were amazed at him, and cut their hands, and said, "God keep us! This is no man! This is no other than a noble angel!"

She said, "This is he about whom you blamed me. I wished him to yield to my desires, but he stood firm. But if he obey not my command, he shall surely be cast into prison, and become one of the despised."

He said, "O my Lord! I prefer the prison to compliance with their bidding: but unless thou turn away their snares from me, I shall play the youth with them, and become one of the unwise."

And his Lord heard him and turned aside their snares from him: for he is the Hearer, the Knower.

Yet resolved they, even after they had seen the signs of his innocence, to imprison him for a time.<sup>1</sup>

ii

In the Dasam Granth we find the story of Joseph and Zulaikha in a new garb. The Shah of Rome (probably Constantinople) had a beautiful daughter named Zulaikha. The Shah of Egypt had a handsome son named Yusuf Khan, who was admired by all the women. His brothers were jealous of him, and one day while out hunting they threw him down a well and reported at home that he had been eaten by a lion. A trader found Joseph, pulled him out of the well, and took him to the city of "Rome" to sell him. Zulaikha saw him and paid the exorbitant price asked for him. He was brought up carefully until he was grown, then one day

She took him to the art gallery,  
And showed him many kinds of pictures;

Then when she had made him very happy

She spoke to him in this wise:

"Come, let us make love to one another,

There is no one standing here,—

Who can see or tell?...

I am a young woman, you are a young man,

We both have peerless beauty.

Let modesty go, make love!

Why be obstinate, O prince?"

"You who say, 'No one sees us'

Speak like a blind person.

The seven witnesses see us...

<sup>1</sup> Rodwell, J. M., p. 230 ff.



When we two shall go to the court of the Holy King  
 With what face shall we give answer to him?...  
 Listen, Beautiful One, I can't have pleasure with you,  
 Even if a hundred thousand gods command me."  
 Saying this, he started off while the woman stood looking;  
 But she seized his garment with her hand,  
 And held on to it as Joseph ran off.  
 The fulfilment of love she did not get then,  
 But she remained bold and shameless.

Joseph became a young man, and she became older,  
 But the fulfilment of love never left her mind.

One day as Joseph came with a deer,  
 On the pretense of inquiring something  
 She laid her hand on him.

His horse, crest and all, and his clothing  
 Was burnt up by the woman's passionate longing,  
 But because he dwelt in her heart, he was saved.

Joseph, seeing the woman's condition, was amazed  
 And gave her all that she desired.

Thus, by burning up his clothing and horse,  
 Zulaikha beguiled him.

After bringing him up as her son,  
 She married him as her lover.

Whomever a woman goes after  
 Has no hope of escape;  
 With all her wiles him she beguiles,  
 Be he Shiv or Indar himself!

Trai Charitar 201:14-26.

Thus we have two versions of this famous story based on the original biblical account. All agree that Joseph was sold into slavery because of the jealousy of his brothers; that he was bought by an official whose wife became enamoured of him; and that when he fled, she seized his garment. In the first two accounts she uses it as evidence against him, and eventually gets him thrown into prison. In the third account the ending is quite different, and she finally marries him.

The whole process is interesting as showing how folk tales spread and develop.

## 6. From the Twelve Months

The Lament of the Gopis, from the Krishan Autar by the poet Syām; with sensuous imagery characteristic of the poet;



In Magghar<sup>1</sup> we sported with Syām (The Black One,  
Krishna),  
and our hearts found joy.  
When we became cold, then, in order to despel it  
we clung to Syām, limb to limb,  
Where the chambeli flowers were blossoming,  
and the water of Jamuna rippled along.  
At that time the season brought happiness,  
but now this season (of separation) has brought pain.  
(Verse 876)

Something of the guru's sense of awe, yet of appreciation  
before the omnipotence of the immortal flashes forth in these  
verses from the Vachitar Natak:

In all fourteen worlds Thy discus roves and Thy command-  
ment goes.  
With which Thou emptiest the full, and fillest the empty.  
Among all the living creatures in the ocean or on the land  
Which one is there who can turn aside Thy order?  
As in the month of Bhadon<sup>2</sup> the dark cloud looks beautiful  
So Thy dark body shines;  
The row of Thy teeth flashes like lightning;  
The sound of Thy bells, large and small, is like the crash of  
thunder.  
(Verses 57, 58)

Like the dark clouds of Sawan<sup>3</sup> Thy beauty is seen.  
On beholding it the mountain of blue gems bows its head.  
Thy wondrously beautiful darkness pleases the heart;  
Thou art the comeliest of the comely,  
The most alluring of charmers. (v. 59)  
Thy discus roves in all fourteen worlds.  
Who is such that he can turn aside Thy decree?  
Say, to what quarter can he flee for safety?  
For Death dances on the heads of all. (v. 60)

<sup>1</sup> November-December.

<sup>2</sup> Aug.-Sept. monsoon.

<sup>3</sup> July-Aug. monsoon.







## APPENDIX I

### The Need for Textual and Historical Criticism

#### Westerners look at the Kartarpur Granth<sup>1</sup>

The Sikh religious community has the unique distinction of having in its possession a manuscript of its original Scripture, namely, the Adi Granth kept at Kartarpur in Jullundur District. This old volume, however, seems to have had inappropriate treatment at the hands of the guru's enemies, and has sometimes apparently been treated lightly by the gurus themselves. Perhaps for fear of Mohammadan raids this Granth was kept by Guru Hargobind at his house in Kartarpur. Thence it was stolen by his grandson Dhir Mal, who probably thought that the possession of the Granth would further his aspirations to the guruship. When the guru heard of the loss of the Granth it did not seem to concern him greatly; he only said, "Let the Granth Sahib remain with him. When the Sikhs feel devotion they will deprive him of it."<sup>2</sup> Some thirty years later the followers of Guru Teg Bahadur recovered the Granth from Dhir Mal; but the guru ordered it be returned to him. This order was not obeyed, and when the guru learned that it was with his retinue he saw to it that it was sent back. Tradition has it that he had it deposited in the river Beas and sent for Dhir Mal to take it back<sup>3</sup>. The Kartarpur giani assured us that it was fished out of the water miraculously unharmed; while another tradition says that it was hidden in the sand of the river. Opinion is generally agreed that it is now in the possession of the Sodhis of Kartarpur; and it seems clear that it has often been in hands that were not particularly friendly.

<sup>1</sup> A paper read at the Punjab History Conference and published in the Proceedings, 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Macauliffe IV, p. 213.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* IV, p. 337 and Footnote.



Let me describe a look I had at this Granth when its possession was under litigation. I quote from my rough notes taken on July 7, 1946:

"Kashmiri" paper, brownish, about 12"×8" mounted on newer margin which are lighter in colour, making the page size about 15"×12". Many erasures, some filled in, but several lines completely blotted out in greenish ink. Some erasures were left white. Mostly written by one hand, but size and carefulness varies greatly. Many corrections in the margins. The opening mantra "Ikk Om, Sat Nam" occurs twice. The one in the very beginning is said to be Guru Arjan's writing, but there is no other signature; while the one somewhere in the middle is said to be Guru Hargobind's. Of the former, the Index says it is the guru's *nishan*. Many pages are blank, of the same paper, all numbered. No agreement as to why left blank, according to the giani. Among the blank pages at the very beginning is a page of script which has never been deciphered, even by Kahn Singh of Nabha, according to our giani. (See the remarks about this by Dr. Archer later). There are 974 leaves, or 1948 pages. The paper margins were put on by Dhir Mal. Several verses by Kabir in Rag Asa have been obliterated by someone. (End of my notes).

On November 21, 1946 Dr. J. C. Archer of Yale University and I again saw the Kartarpur Granth. Here is Dr. Archer's account:

The local guardian of the Granth was ready for us, and we all went, together with the giani, to the Fort and the Shish Mahal, (hall of mirrors) removed our shoes, sat on the rug spread for us, while the giani went about opening the safe and exposing the precious volume... it was opened at a stanza from Kabir, which was intended. At last Lochlin and I were invited to move nearer in close proximity to the book. Pages were exhibited at our direction, special features noted and a question-answer conversation carried on.

The huge book measures about fifteen by twelve inches and is about eight inches thick. It contains 974 leaves, only each leaf bearing a number at the upper left hand corner, even numbered; therefore 1948 pages including some blank pages (no one seems to know why these blanks are included, nor for what ultimate purpose). The writing is well done and by "one man" so they said; although the size of the script varies. One page toward the front is full of Gurmukhi letters. As they do not form words, it is assumed these were merely trial writing... A long index of several pages comes first, then the *Mul Mantra* "in Guru Arjan's own hand" they say. It is rather crude, although perfectly



clear, script on a decorated page, that is, a decoration across the top, such as has been true of the Koranic *Fathah*. The effects of erasures are to be seen occasionally... The leaves are all whole, save where an insect has done a bit of harm—nothing much. The paper is Kashmiri, a heavy, parchment-like sheet. The tops, bottoms and outer edges of each leaf are protected by glued-on strips. The volume is, of course, bound but it opens readily at any part. The covers are a silky golden cloth on board, no lettering at all on the outside and there is no record of when, where, by whom it was bound. Were the leaves written separately and then bound much later? Of course they were, but were they long separate and then merely wrapped up? This was often the case with Indian writings, and some were never bound.

The problem of the book is acute. This is considered to be the Adi Granth, the "original" or only copy in existence of the "original"... But it bears no dates, nor any scribe's name, nor is its history clear. Its authenticity cannot be proved. It is said that Guru Teg Bahadur hid it once for fourteen days in the River Beas, to protect it... but there are no signs of water-damage. There are copies here and there, in the Golden Temple, for example.

At the close of the *darshan* cardamom seeds were distributed; *prasad* and *hars* (wreaths) were put about our necks (Loehlin's and mine—I wore mine all the way back to Amritsar). The Sikhs present did obeisance as the book was wrapped again.<sup>1</sup>

The above observations are not so superficial as they might at first seem. For one thing, Dr. Archer's statements are those of a trained observer. Both are the reactions of friendly critics who know how irreplaceable such a book is. Both are from men who have had to study the involved subject of textual criticism of the Christian Scriptures, in an effort to establish the original text with no original manuscripts of it extant. The Sikhs will hold a unique position among the religions of the world if they *prove* through careful textual criticism the widely accepted belief that the Kartarpur Granth is the MS dictated by Guru Arjan. This should not be impossible, and there are qualified Sikh scholars to do it. To this end, would it not be possible to obtain photo-static copies of the entire book? This would not only preserve to the world the ancient book, but make it available for intensive study as well.

<sup>1</sup> Archer, Cathaline Alfor, *John Clark Archer, A. Chronicle*. Privately printed 1959.



If the problem of the Ad Granth is so acute, it should be evident from the preceding account how much more so that of the tenth Granth is. Who wrote it? How really was it compiled? What is its authentic text? What is the purpose of its various books?

Giani Pratap Singh, writing in *Gian Amrit* (in Punjabi) notes that there are several copies of Bhai Mani Singh's original compilation, and says, "There is need of investigating the genuineness of the above-mentioned editions, for there is a difference in the order and division of their contents."<sup>1</sup> He further cites the fact that the Patna edition has 210 more verses than the currently accepted edition.<sup>2</sup> The giani accepts as the guru's genuine writings the Jāp, Akal Ustat, Thirty-three Sawaiyas, Vachitar Natak, Gian Prabodh, Chandi Charitar I and II and Var Sri Bhagauti, and the Shastar Nam Mala.<sup>3</sup> The fact that there is no general agreement as to what the guru wrote himself, what he edited, what the bards wrote and whether he approved their writings or not, all point to the need of literary criticism.

S. M. Latif, the Muslim historian, seems to be on the whole favourably inclined toward the Sikhs, but he stigmatizes Guru Teg Bahadur as follows:

From a devout *Udāsi* (indifferent to the world) in Bengal, the Guru seems to have turned out a regular freebooter on his return to the Panjab. He is said to have taken to a predatory career, and to have laid waste and plundered the whole country lying between Hansi and the Sutlej. He formed a league with a Mahomedan fanatic, named Adam Hafiz, and, while this zealot levied blackmail on the Mahomedans, the Sikh apostle did the same on rich Hindus. Predatory excursions were made into the agricultural districts, and to a large number of well-armed disciples were added rural clans, to whom promises of large payments and rich booties were made. To add to the criminal conduct, the confederates afforded a ready asylum to all the fugitives from the Moghal State who sought protection with them. The imperial troops were sent after them, and they were at last captured and brought before the emperor.<sup>4</sup>

All this is quite at variance with the picture we get from such a Sikh writer as Dr. Trilochan Singh, who has recently prepared

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Giani Pratap, *Gian Amrit* for Jan. 1966, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 259.



a well-documented life of Guru Teg Bahadur and which has been published in a handsome volume of 335 pages by the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee of Delhi.<sup>1</sup> He presents the guru as a martyr to religious freedom for all faiths. Critics might say that both writers, one a Muslim, one a Sikh, present extreme and biased points of view. There has been a dearth of historical material on Guru Teg Bahadur until just recently. More critical research on the ninth guru, who seems to be emerging as one of the great liberal religious leaders of his day, and one who, moreover, sealed his belief with his life, should be welcomed.

Latif has this to say of the tenth guru's treatment of the *masands*: "The masands... who were found guilty of cruel treatment were thrown into dungeons, or into boiling oil."<sup>2</sup> Source material such as that provided in the collection of Hukam Namas made by Dr. Ganda Singh, gives instruction to ignore corrupt *masands*, and to receive back into the Khalsa fellowship such as were repentant. Historical criticism has thus answered this charge of Dr. Latif.

Banda Singh is another controversial figure; indeed the Sikhs of his day were divided into the *Tat Khalsa* rejecting him, and the *Bandeī Khalsa*, accepting him almost as the eleventh guru. Latif, as might be expected, scourges him unmercifully. On meeting opposition from the Muslim inhabitants of Batala in the Punjab,

Banda then burst open the gates, entered the city, and set it on fire, beginning with the house of Kazi Abdulla, whose wife and children were massacred in cold blood. Batala had been celebrated from a remote period as a great seat of learning, and a college flourished there at the time. This institution was fired, and the whole city given up to pillage and indiscriminate massacre... His memory is held in the same detestation by the Sikhs as by the Mahomedans. His policy was directly opposed to that of Nanak and Govind, his predecessors... He tortured and put to death many of the staunchest adherents of Govind, because they had refused to comply with his new-fangled doctrines.<sup>3</sup>

Modern Sikh writers tend to regard Banda as a freedom fighter, and Dr. Ganda Singh makes him out as the founder of far-reaching economic and social reforms, such as abolishing

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Dr. Trilochan, *Guru Teg Bahadur*, especially Chapter XXIV.

<sup>2</sup> Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 273.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 275, p. 280.



the system of big absentee landlords and establishing the owner-farmer system characteristic of the modern Punjab. This controversy, too, seems to be well on the way to solution by historical research.

Drs. Grewal and Bal of the Punjab University History department note the lack of historical evidence given by Guru Gobind Singh's contemporaries and fear that such evidence as there is has not been put to use :

If we turn to contemporary and near contemporary evidence enough of this detail gets confirmed, but not all. That a considerable number of the Sikhs used to visit Anandpur at the time of Baisakhi and that on the Baisakhi of 1699 many of the Sikhs were especially asked to come, that the *Khande ki pahul* was administered to those who were willing to become the Guru's Khalsa (though no exact figures are mentioned anywhere), that a considerable number of people—the *brahmans* and *khatris* in particular—rejected the *pahul*, that the Khalsa were required to wear their *keshas* and arms, that they were required not to smoke, that the appellation of "singh" came to be adopted by a large number of the Khalsa—all this is there in the earliest evidence. But the dramatic call for the laying down of life for the Guru, his request to the five beloved that they should initiate him into the Khalsa by administering *pahul*, the vesting of the Guruship in either the Khalsa *panth* or the *Adi Granth*—all these very important and inter-related items are not to be found in the available contemporary evidence. In fact, in the near contemporary records left to posterity by the Sikhs themselves, there are frequent references to the "five-weapons" rather than to five k's ; and the *Adi Granth* is not given an exclusive preference over the *bani* of Guru Gobind Singh.

All these vital points are sanctified by the belief of a large number of the followers of Guru Gobind Singh from the late eighteenth century down to the present day. It may be argued in fact that the strength of that belief goes in favour of their authenticity. It is not being suggested that their authenticity is definitely unwarranted. But one cannot help thinking that the authenticity of these vital points is yet to be firmly established, unless of course one refuses to think historically and for oneself. Search for more contemporary evidence must be made ; the later tradition and the historical circumstance under which it came into existence must be thoroughly examined ; and, meanwhile, the historian may suspend his judgment on these vital points.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Grewal, J. S., and Bal, S. S., *Guru Gobind Singh*, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1967, pp. 188, 189.



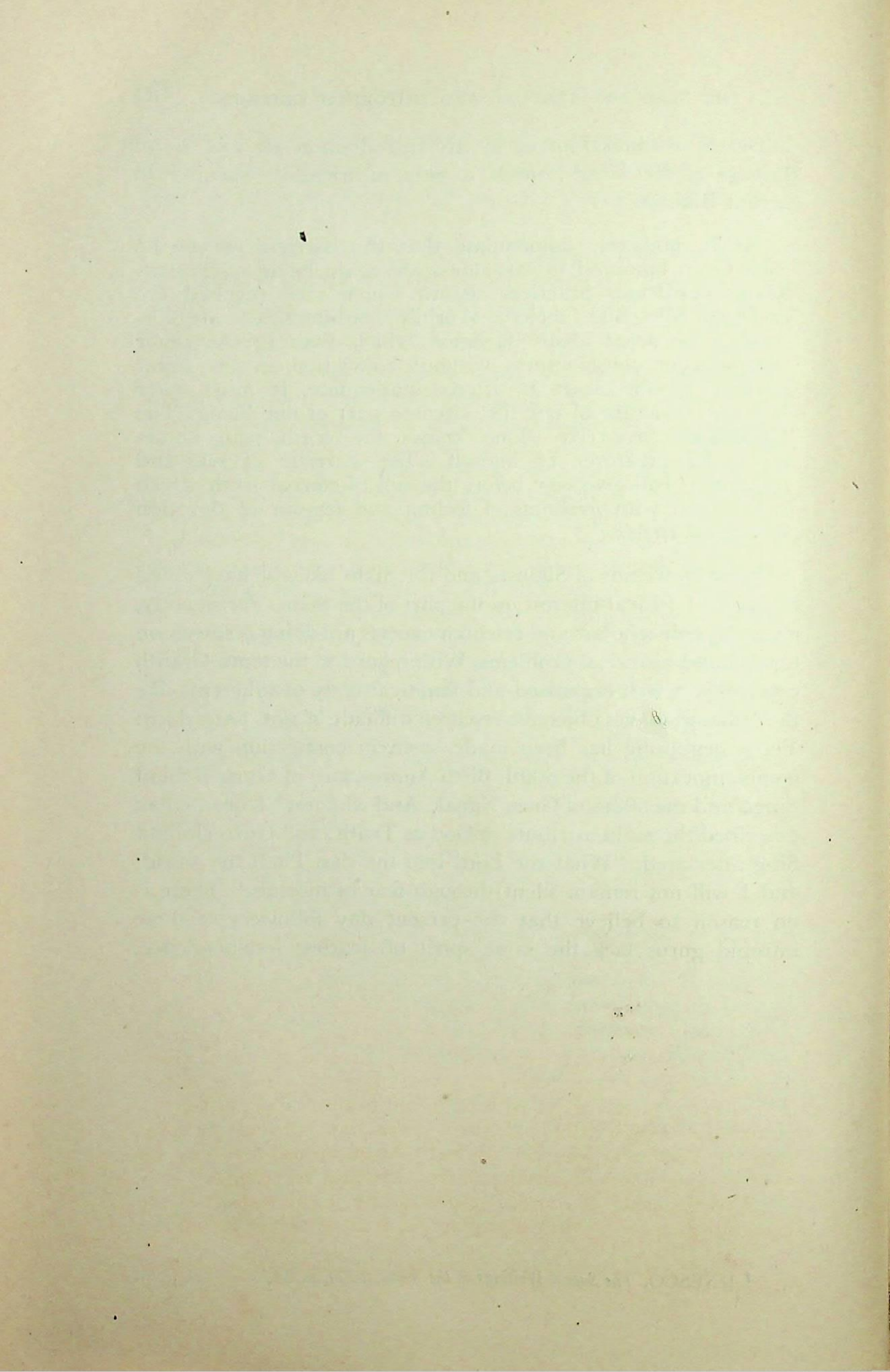
Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, in his Introduction to *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*<sup>1</sup> sounds a note of friendly warning to current Sikhism :

It is, however, unfortunate that the barriers which the Sikh Guru laboured to cast down are again being re-created. Many pernicious practices against which they revolted are creeping into Sikh society. Worldly considerations are corrupting the great ideals. Religion which lives in the outer threshold of consciousness without conviction in the mind or love in the heart is utterly inadequate. It must enter into the structure of our life, become part of our being. The Upanishad says : He alone knows the truth who knows all living creatures as himself. The barriers of seas and mountains will give way before the call of eternal truth which is set forth with freshness of feeling and fervour of devotion in the *Adi Granth*.

Western friends of Sikhism and the Sikhs likewise have noted this lack of critical interest on the part of the Sikhs. Fortunately, many of their scholars and research experts are doing research on textual and historical problems. With regard to the tenth Granth especially, a well organized and fanatical body of adherents like the Nihangs makes objective research difficult, if not hazardous! Yet a beginning has been made, even in connection with the commemoration of the 300th Birth Anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh and the 500th of Guru Nanak. And why not? Guru Nanak described the main attribute of God as Truth; and Guru Gobind Singh declared, "What the Lord told me that I tell the world, and I will not remain silent through fear of mortals." There is no reason to believe that the present day followers of these intrepid gurus lack the same spirit of fearless independence.

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, 1960, p. 24.







## APPENDIX II

### Two Religious Research Institutes

An indication of the interest of Sikhism in the problem of the origin and development of religion and of the relationship between religions is seen in the proposed Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan at the Punjabi University, Patiala. This is to be the home of a Department of Comparative Religion where five of the major religions will be studied, namely "Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Sikhism." The foundation stone was laid by President Zakir Husain on December 27, 1967. The description of the proposed building as given in their brochure is most impressive:

The Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan—the home of the department—rising to a height of 80 ft. in white structure, will architecturally be the focal point of the University campus. The gigantic arches of its hall, boat-shaped library wings and surrounding water will catch the essential spirit of Indian architecture. The Bhavan, finished in white marble slabs, will be a five-petalled structure in the midst of a 1000 ft. long and 200 ft. wide pool, connected with land by a floating bridge. The approach to it will be through a wide-open paved yard which will be shaded and coloured by Gulmohar blossom giving red and yellow foreground to the pure-white building. The layout of the building is symmetrical in plan. It has no rear or flanks and will look identical from all sides giving equal importance to the five constituent departments. The pentagon-shaped hall will be roofed by fine elongated arches facing skyward. Each of these arches will shelter under it a library unit for one of the religions to be studied, *i.e.*, Sikhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. Accommodation will be provided in the unit for scholars and research fellows, a sectional library and a cabin for quiet contemplation. The five identical constituent wings are designed in the style of boats floating on water. The glazing in the arches will be in aluminium and light-green tinted glass which will avoid direct sunrays and provide uniform light in the hall. The Bhavan will be mounted over by an ever-blazing flame signifying purity, life and learning.

This fostering of mutual understanding and respect is the essential purpose of this discipline of Comparative Religion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan*, Department of Comparative Religion, Punjabi University, Patiala, Dec. 27, 1967.



This is indeed a worthy commemoration of the 300th Birth Anniversary of the guru, as it depicts the spirit of tolerance and understanding characteristic of him which has been the theme of the preceding pages of this little book.

Another similar venture in understanding, though on a much lesser scale, is in process of development at the Baring Christian College at Batala in the Punjab. This was commenced in 1966 with the adoption by the Board of Governors of the college of the Constitution of the "Christian Institute of Sikh Studies." The main purpose is research and communication. A generous grant by the Anglican Church of Canada made possible the erection of a beautiful three-storeyed building to house the institute. The ground floor consists of a hall and office rooms; the middle storey houses the libraries on Sikhism, Christianity, and Comparative Religion, and that of the smaller Church History Association of India, Northern Branch. The top floor has living quarters for researchers and others.

Both these ventures witness to a growing hunger for religious understanding and spiritual harmony. With vast and incalculable atomic forces ready for release, these and similar institutions aim to mediate the message of prophets, apostles, pandits, and gurus "to restrain the people from folly" and to proclaim love as the supreme motivating power for the survival of mankind.



# Appendix III: Historical Tables

TABLE I : The Gurus

Father's occupation	Name	Dates Guruship	Birthplace	Events, Writings	Built	Residence	Muslim Emperor
Farmer ..	1 NANAK (Bedi)	1469—1539	Talawandi or Nankana S	Founder. World traveller. "Japji".	Kartarpur Ravi	Talwandi Kartarpur	Babar 1483—1530
Trader ..	2 ANGAD (Lahna) (Tehun)	1539—1552 Age 34	1504 at Matte di Sarai, Muktsar	Visit of Hamayun-Gurmukhi	Goindwal Bias	Khadur near Tarn T.	Hamayun 1530—1556
Trader ..	3 AMAR DAS (Bhalla)	1552—1574 Age 73	1479 Basarka near Amritsar	Langar. Visit of Akbar "Anand"	Goindwal Bawali	Goindwal	Akbar 1556—1605
Hereditary	4 RAMDAS (Jetha) (Sodhi)	1574—1581 Age 40	1534 Lahore	Appointed Masands	Tanks : Amritsar Santokhsar	Amritsar Goindwal	..
Guruship	5 ARJAN ..	1581—1606 Age 18	1563 Goindwal ..	Compiled Granth 1604 Martyred "Sukhmani"	Har Mandar Tarn Taran Kartarpur Bawali, Lhr. Goindpur	Amritsar ..	Jehangir 1606—1628
	6 HAR GOBIND	1606—1645 Age 11	1595 Wadali near Amritsar	4 Battles : Amritsar Har Gobind-pur Nathana Gursar	Alkal Takht Kaulsar Har Gobind-pur Kiratpur by son Gurditta	Gwalior Strinagar Amritsar Har Gobind-pur	..



Table 1: The Gurus—(Concl'd.)

Father's occupation	Name	Dates Guruship	Birthplace	Events, Writings	Built	Residence	Muslim Emperor
Guruship Hereditary	7 HAR RAI	1645—1661 Age 14	1630 Kiratpur	Kartarpur .. Zoo founded Army 2200	..	Kiratpur	Shah Jahan 1628—1658
	8 HAR	1661—1664 Age 5½	1656 Kiratpur	D. Small-pox Delhi	..	Kiratpur	Aurangzeb 1658—1707
	9 TEG BAHADUR	1664—1675 Age 42	1621 Amritsar	Travels : Patna Kamrup— Martyred	Began Anandpur	Kiratpur Anandpur	..
	10 GOBIND SINGH	1675—1708 Age 9	1666 Patna	Founded Khalsa— Panch Kakke 4 sons killed With 57 Bards pro- duced Da- sam Granth and put Ad Granth in final form “Dardama Bir”	Anandpur Paonta	Anandpur Nander	Bahadur Shah 1707



Table 2: Main Bhagats of the Ad Granth

Name	Caste	Dates	Birthplace	Place of Teaching	Writings	Tomb	Verses in Granth
JAIDEV ..	Brahmin Poet	B. 1170	Kanduli Lower Bengal	Wanderer Utkal	Gitagovind in Sanskrit	Kanduli ..	6
NAMDEV ..	Tailor-Dacoit	D. 1350	Karad, Bombay Pres.	Pandharpur on Godavari All India	Namdev Gatha in Marathi and Hindi	Pandharpur	245
TRILOCHAN	Vaisya	B. 1267	Pandharpur ..	Same ..	..	..	20
PARMA-NAND	..	..	..	Barsi near Pandharpur	..	..	3
SADHNA ..	Butcher	C. 1300	Sehwan, Sind ..	..	..	Sarhind Pjb.	4
BENI ..	..	Ancient ..	..	Unknown	..	..	19
RAMANAND	Gaur Brahmin	C. 1400—1450	Prayag Mailkot, Mysore or	Banares	..	Banares ..	3
DHANNA ..	Jat Farmer	1415	Dhuan, Tank Rajputana	Same	..	Banares ..	6

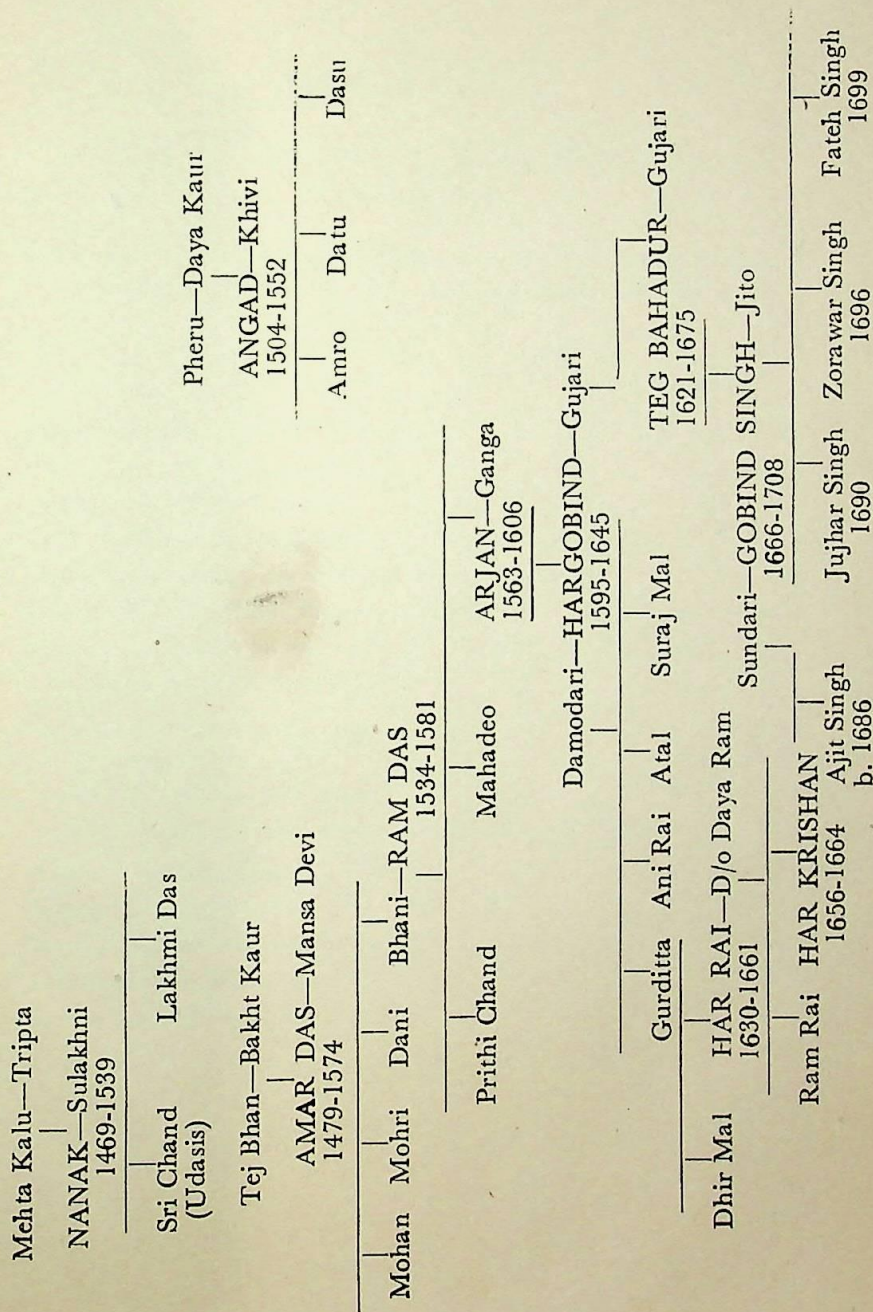


Table 2: Main Bhagats of the Ad Granth—(Concl.d.)

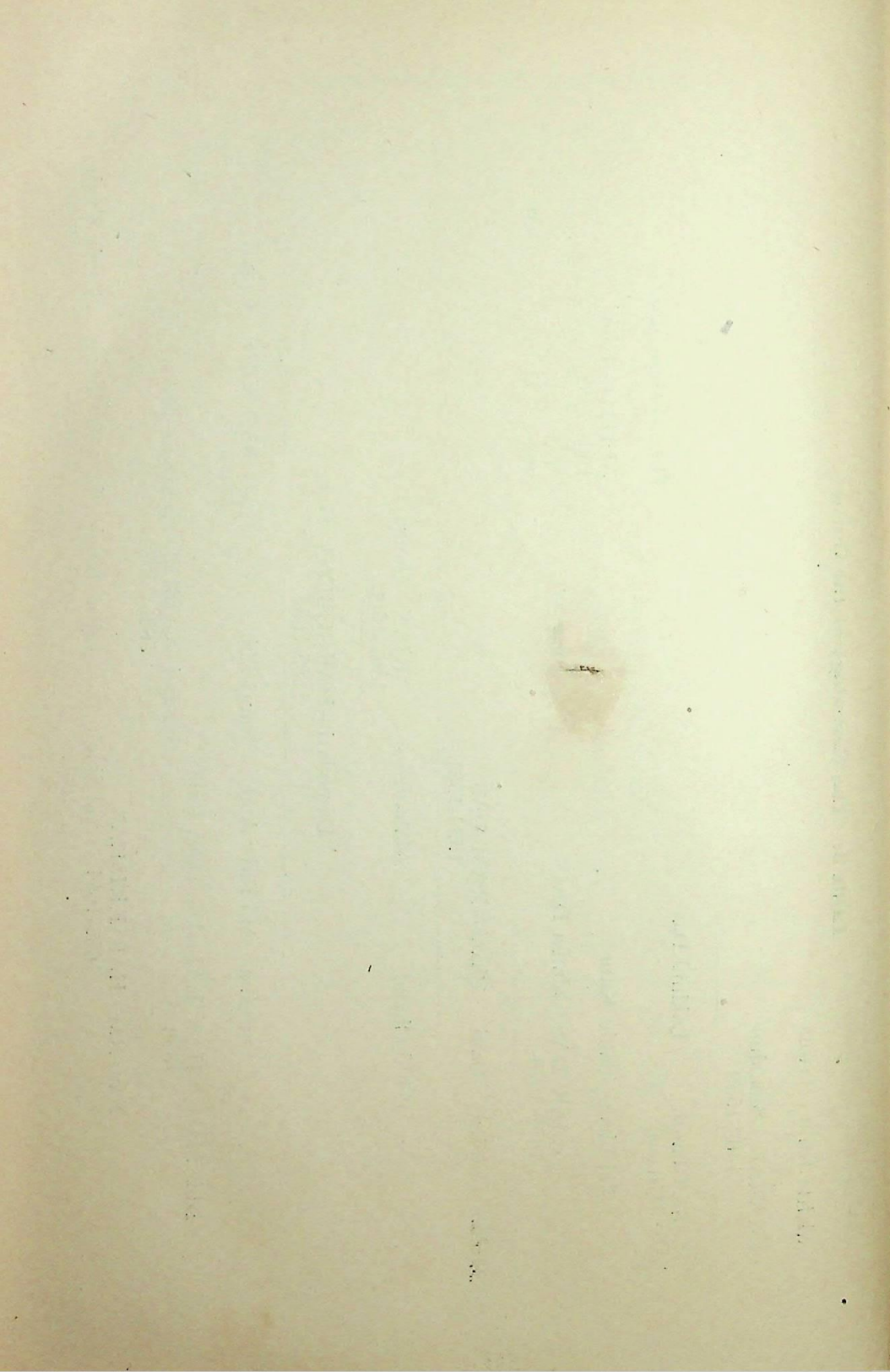
Name	Caste	Dates	Birthplace	Place of Teaching	Writings	Tomb	Verses in Granth
PIPA ..	King	1425	Gagaraungarh	Dwaraka W. Kathiar	..	..	2
SAIN ..	Barber	C. 1400	Rewa near Jabalpur (old Bandhavgarh)	Rewa ..	..	..	4
KABIR ..	Weaver	1398—1517	Banares ..	Same ..	Kabir in Hindi	Maghar near Gorakhpur	1,122
RAVI DAS ..	Chamar	C. 1400	..	Banares ..	Banian	..	141
MIRA BAI	Princess	1504	Rajputana ..	Chitor-Mewar	In Hindi	Dwaraka ..	..
SHEIKH FARD	Afghan Mhdn.	D. 1552	Kothiwal near Dipalpur	Pakpattan ..	..	Pakpattan Pjb.	116
(SHEIKH BRAHM)	..	D. 1265	..	..	..	..	..
DHIKHAN ..	Sufi Mhdn.	D. 1573	Near Lucknow	..	..	..	..
SUR DAS ..	Brahmin	B. 1528	..	Sandila Oudh	..	Banares ..	2



Table 3: The Genealogy of the Gurus









## APPENDIX IV

### Table of Contents of the Granth of the Tenth Guru

*References are to the 24 point type edition revised by their Sodhak Committee  
and printed at the Gurmat Press, Amritsar, dated 1991 Bikrami,  
or A.D. 1934*

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Shastar Nām Māla, 91 pages .. ..	717—808
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Zafarnāma, Hikāyāt, 39 pages .. ..	1389—1428





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